

Archival Evidence and Byzantine Art in Fifteenth-Century Venetian Crete

The Case of Georgios Mavrianos and Konstantinos Gaitanas

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Unfortunately the history of Byzantine art does not have sources such as Pliny the Elder's *Natural History* or Vasari's *Lives of the Most Excellent Painters, Sculptors, and Architects* at its disposal. Hence Our [*sic*] knowledge of the artists who worked on the territory of the Byzantine Empire and the regions under its cultural influence is rather scarce. It is mostly based on the rare signatures of artists and the even rarer mentions of their names or their works in written sources, usually in chronicles, private letters, hagiographies, legal documents[,] etc. The Late Byzantine period has fared somewhat better as more material [has] survived from this time. . . . Venetian archives are particularly important as they contain evidence on the work of Cretan artists from this period.

So Miodrag Marković began his presentation at the Byzantine Studies Colloquium entitled *Monumental Painting in Byzantium and Beyond: New Perspectives* held at Dumbarton Oaks in 2016.¹ Marković was certainly aware of the research of Father Mario Cattapan, who was the first to highlight the importance of archival documents for the study of Byzantine art on Crete under Venetian rule. In the late 1960s, Cattapan consulted

over five hundred thousand acts from the archival series *Duca di Candia* and *Notai di Candia* and compiled a list of 132 painters active on Crete from 1313 to 1500. More than fifty years after Cattapan's research on the State Archives of Venice, the present article aims to connect for the first time commissions to painters documented in Veneto-Cretan notarial deeds with surviving church decoration programs. Specifically, we will connect published and unpublished contracts with wall paintings executed by two painters: Georgios Mavrianos in the churches of St. George in Vrachasi and Panagia in Kato Symi and Konstantinos Gaitanas in the Church of the Holy Apostles in Kato Karkasa. Their work will be thoroughly presented and analyzed in connection with the content of the relevant documents, and it will be placed within the context of contemporary art. With a view to evaluating the information given both by the documents referring to these three churches and the ensuing art-historical analysis, we begin with an overview of the published archival material and the pertinent information it provides on commissions of wall paintings and on the painters themselves.

Between 1969 and 1972, Cattapan published forty-two archival documents, among which we find contracts of apprenticeship, partnerships of painters, and contracts for Byzantine icons and wall-painting commissions.² Based on Cattapan's findings, scholarship has

1 M. Marković, "Painters in the Late Byzantine World (1204–1453)" (paper, Byzantine Studies Colloquium, Dumbarton Oaks, 4 November 2016).

2 M. Cattapan, "Nuovi elenchi e documenti dei pittori in Creta dal 1300 al 1500," *Θησαυρίσματα* 9 (1972): 202–35; cf. Cattapan's first

so far focused on icon commissions with little attention paid to the commissions of wall paintings in Venetian Crete.³ As Cattapan has already observed, the churches decorated with wall paintings outnumber by far the preserved contracts.⁴ Indeed, Cattapan published eight archival documents of wall-painting commissions and mentioned three more, which prove that a contract between the artist and the person who made the commission existed. However, none of these contracts has ever been connected to any of the 845 churches listed by Giuseppe Gerola and Kostas Lassithiotakes, nor to any other surviving church.

Cattapan published contracts of wall-painting commissions that involved the following painters: (1) Nikolaos Vassalos, employed by Markos Mouatsos (*Mudacio*) to paint the Church of Panagia in Varvari (*Vairvari*) (1331);⁵ (2) Ioannes Gradenigos, employed by the hieromonk Daniel Gastreas to paint the Church of Christ Pantokrator, probably in Chandax (1353);⁶ (3) Ioannes Frangos, employed by Konstantios Gerardos to paint the Church of St. George in Kyrmousi (1371);⁷ (4) Georgios Mavrianos, employed by the Venetian noble Nicola Corner to paint subjects from the

life of Jesus Christ and the Virgin in the Church of Panagia in Kato Symi (1419);⁸ (5) Emmanuel Souranas (*Surana*, read by Cattapan as *Hurana*) and Andronikos Synadenos, both engaged by Georgios Piperes to paint the Church of Panagia in Malia (*Damalia*) (1399);⁹ (6) Angelos Apokafkos, employed by Markos Pavlopoulos to paint the Last Judgment in the Church of Panagia of the Angels (*Sancta Maria Angelorum*) in Chandax (1421; modern Heraklion);¹⁰ (7) Georgios Mavrianos (*Mauriano*, read by Cattapan as *Mancuso*), employed by the commissaries of the Venetian noble Anna Correr (*Corrario*, read by Cattapan as *Cornario*) to paint Christ the Savior and other saints in the Church of Christ the Savior in Kitharida (*Chitharida*, read by Cattapan as *Chitanda*) (1422);¹¹ and (8) Georgios Pelegrin, engaged by Lauro Querini, commissary of the Venetian noble Mandalucia Querini, to paint the Crucifixion in the Church of St. Hieronymus, probably in Chandax (1470).¹² Three additional documents have been left by Cattapan without transcription and unfortunately without archival references. These refer to (9) the abovementioned Georgios Mavrianos, who received a payment for his work in the Church of St. George in Vrachasi (*Vraghassi*, read by Cattapan as *Veargassi*) (1401); (10) Konstantinos Moschatos, who returned the payment he had received in advance because he had not finished his work at an unnamed church (1402); and (11) Alexios Apokafkos, who promised to paint some curtains after his return from Valsamonero (1412).¹³

checklist in M. Cattapan, "Nuovi documenti riguardanti pittori cretesi dal 1300 al 1500," in *Πεπραγμένα τοῦ Β' Διεθνoῦς Κρητολογικοῦ Συνεδρίου* (Athens, 1969), 3:29–46.

3 See, for example, M. Vassilaki, "Looking at Icons and Contracts for Their Commission in Fifteenth-Century Venetian Crete," in *Paths to Europe: From Byzantium to the Low Countries*, ed. B. Coulie (Milan, 2017), 101–16; M. Vassilaki, "Commissioning Art in Fifteenth-Century Venetian Crete: The Case of Sinai," in *I Greci durante la venetocrazia: Uomini, spazio, idee (XIII–XVIII sec.)*; *Atti del convegno internazionale studi, Venezia, 3–7 dicembre, 2007*, ed. C. Maltezou, A. Tzavara, and D. Vlassi (Venice, 2009), 741–48, 839–43; and M. Constantoudaki–Kitromilides, "Aspetti della committenza artistica a Creta veneziana secondo documenti d'archivio (pittura, argenteria, oreficeria)," in *Economia e arte, sec. XIII–XVIII: Atti della trentatreesima Settimana di studi, 30 aprile–4 maggio 2001*, ed. S. Cavaciocchi (Firenze, 2002), 601–10, at 606–7.

4 Cattapan, "Nuovi elenchi," 231; for an incomplete list of Cretan churches decorated with wall paintings, see G. Gerola, *Elenco topografico delle chiese affrescate di Creta* (Venice, 1935), also published in Greek translation by K. E. Lassithiotakes: G. Gerola and K. E. Lassithiotakes, *Τοπογραφικός κατάλογος τῶν τοιχογραφημένων ἐκκλησιῶν τῆς Κρήτης* (Heraklion, 1961). Lassithiotakes added more churches to Gerola's initial list.

5 Cattapan, "Nuovi elenchi," 227, doc. 26. This contract was later canceled with the consent of both parties.

6 Cattapan, "Nuovi elenchi," 227–28, doc. 27.

7 Cattapan, "Nuovi elenchi," 228, doc. 28.

8 Cattapan, "Nuovi elenchi," 228–29, doc. 29.

9 Cattapan, "Nuovi elenchi," 229–30, doc. 30.

10 Cattapan, "Nuovi elenchi," 230, doc. 31. The subject of the Last Judgment was erroneously transcribed by Cattapan as *dbestera parisia* instead of *Deftera Parusia*.

11 Cattapan, "Nuovi elenchi," 230–31, doc. 32.

12 Cattapan, "Nuovi elenchi," 231, doc. 33.

13 Cattapan, "Nuovi elenchi," 226, 232. This document, however, does not disclose the nature of Apokafkos's business in Valsamonero. For the attribution of some of the wall paintings of the church to this painter, see M. Constantoudaki–Kitromilides, "Alexios and Anghelos Apokafkos, Constantinopolitan Painters in Crete (1399–1421): Documents from the State Archives in Venice," *Proceedings of the 21st CIEB* (London, 2006), 45–46, and A. Katsioti, "Το κλίτος του αγίου Ιωάννη του Προδρόμου," in *Οι τοιχογραφίες της Μονής του Βαλσαμονέρου: Απόψεις και φρονήματα της ύστερης βυζαντινής ζωγραφικής στη βενετοκρατούμενη Κρήτη*, ed. M. Acheimastou–Potamianou, A. Katsioti, and M. Borboudake (Athens, 2020), 181–290, esp. 183–85, with the earlier bibliography.

In the 132 painters listed by Cattapan, there are only eleven cases in which the place of the painters' origin is stated. More specifically, four painters were from Constantinople (Theodoros Museles, Georgios Chrysokephalos, Emmanuel Ouranos, and Ioannes *Tu Maistro*), four from Venice (Gioacchino Tedaldo, Benedetto Gradenigo, Fantino Morante, and Nicola Storlando), two from the Peloponnese (Ioannes Strilitsas of Bathas and Georgios Strilitsas of Bathas), and one from Cyprus (Bailianos Katellanos).¹⁴ In the contracts of wall-painting commissions published by Cattapan, none of the painters are from Constantinople.¹⁵ Cattapan indicated Tenedos as the place of origin of Alexios Apokafkos, and perhaps also of Nikolaos Philanthropenos, but did not mention his sources.¹⁶ This might be a conjecture based on a source other than the archival documents, and this is why Cattapan did not mention it. Among the hundreds of

dedicatory inscriptions on Crete, there is only one that mentions the painter's place of origin. At the Church of Agioi Pateres in Ano Floria, the inscription states that the frescoes were created in 1470 by Xenos Digenes from the Peloponnese (Morea).¹⁷ This painter is not included in Cattapan's list because he does not appear in the Veneto-Cretan archival documents.

Declaring the place of origin was common in the notarial deeds only for those who were on Crete temporarily or for those who had just arrived to Crete as immigrants due to economic or other reasons.¹⁸ It follows that in the great majority of cases when no place of origin was given, the painters were from Crete. This is particularly important in view of the discussion about the origin of the painters who created several Cretan church decorations of high quality in the first half of the fifteenth century. These high-quality programs, combined with the fact that Crete was a place of refuge, have led scholars to attribute arbitrarily a Constantinopolitan origin to painters active on Crete during that period.¹⁹ A further reason for

14 See nos. 11, 13, 15, 20, 21, 28, 32–33, 38, 111–12 of Cattapan's list (Cattapan, "Nuovi elenchi," 203–8). A questionable entry is that of the monk (*frate*) Antonio da Negroponte (no. 109), whose Euboean origin is not clearly affirmed by Cattapan.

15 Emmanuel Ouranos from Constantinople has been previously identified by Cattapan and other scholars with Emmanuel Souranas, who was hired together with Andronikos Synadenos to paint the Church of Panagia in Malia in 1399 (see above, p. 246). Cattapan lists this painter as "Urana (Uranò) Emmanuele di Con. poli, 1399–1414" (Cattapan, "Nuovi documenti," 37, no. 33; cf. Cattapan, "Nuovi elenchi," 204, no. 33). Indeed, this is the way the painter was recorded in the notarial registers in: (a) 1402 (*Urano*) (Archivio di Stato di Venezia [henceforth A.S.V.], *Notai di Candia*, b. 145 [Costanzo Maurica], quad. 1, fol. 241r; cf. Cattapan, "Nuovi elenchi," 219, doc. 14); (b) 1413 (*Vrana*) (A.S.V., *Notai di Candia*, b. 245 [Andrea Sevasto], fol. 47v); and (c) 1413 (*Urana*) (A.S.V., *Notai di Candia*, b. 245 [Andrea Sevasto], fol. 47v). The painter's name has been understood by Maria Constantoudaki-Kitromilides as "Vranas" (M. Constantoudaki-Kitromilides, "Viaggi di pittori tra Costantinopoli e Candia: Documenti d'archivio e influssi sull'arte [XIV–XV sec.]," in *I Greci durante la venetocrazia* [cf. n. 3], 709–23, at 712–13). However, both Venetian notaries, namely Costanzo Maurica and Andrea Sevasto, use a clear form for the Latin letter "v" that should not be read as a "u" at the beginning of the word (e.g., *vocato, vobis, viri* instead of *uocato, uobis, uiri*). Therefore, the use of "v" in the first document of 1413 probably constitutes an exception. Finally, the aforementioned two documents of 1402 and 1413 refer to Emmanuel Ouranos as originating from Constantinople. Notwithstanding, the document of 1399 concerning the wall-painting commission for the Church of Panagia in Malia refers to a certain Emmanuel Souranas without mentioning his place of origin. For this reason, the identification of Emmanuel Souranas with Emmanuel Ouranos from Constantinople should at present be considered incorrect.

16 Cattapan, "Nuovi elenchi," 232.

17 G. Gerola, *Monumenti veneti nell'isola di Creta*, 4 vols. (Venice, 1905–1932), 4:449–51, no. 24. For the correct reading of the date, see P. L. Vocotopoulos, "Η χρονολογία των τοιχογραφιών του Ξένου Διγενή στα Απάνω Φλώρια Σέλινου," in *Αρχαιολογικά Ανάλεκτα ἐξ Ἀθηνῶν* 16.1–2 (1983): 142–45, esp. 145. On the dedicatory inscriptions of Cretan churches, see V. Tsamakda (with A. Rhoby), *Die griechischen Inschriften Kretas (13.–17. Jh.)* (forthcoming).

18 See, for example, a contract of apprenticeship referring to the temporary presence on Crete of the Constantinopolitan scholar Ioannes Argyropoulos in 1423: *Manifestum facio ego, Iohannes Argiropulo de Constantinopoli, moram presentialiter trahens Candide . . .* (I, Ioannes Argyropoulos of Constantinople, temporarily being delayed in Chandax, make public . . .) (T. Ganchou, "Ιωάννης Αργυρόπουλος, Γεώργιος Τραπεζούντιος et le patron crétois Γεώργιος Μωρίκας," *Θησαυρίσματα* 38 [2008]: 105–212, at 210–11, doc. 2)). Many other examples can be offered for several immigrants from the island of Tenedos who moved to Crete after 1381. See *Manifestum facio [ego.] Hemanuel Thelimatari de Tenedo, nunc habitator burgi Candide . . .* (I, Emmanuel Thelimatares of Tenedos, now resident of the suburbs of Chandax, make public . . .) (A.S.V., *Notai di Candia*, b. 273 [Niccolò Tonisto], fol. 5 [6]v [act of 26 August 1385]), and *Manifestum facio ego[,] Michael Orffano de Tenedo, nunc habitator burgi Candide . . .* (I, Michael Orfanos of Tenedos, now resident in the suburb of Chandax, make public . . .) (A.S.V., *Notai di Candia*, b. 273 [Niccolò Tonisto], fol. 7 [8]v [act of 23 September 1385]).

19 The attribution of such works to painters from Constantinople was mainly promoted by M. Borboudakes, "Η τέχνη κατὰ τὴ Βενετοκρατία," in *Κρήτη: Ιστορία καὶ πολιτισμός*, ed. N. M. Panagiotakes (Heraklion, 1988), 2:231–88, at 261, and K. Gallas, K. Wessel, and M. Borboudakes, *Byzantinisches Kreta* (Munich, 1983), 125–27. Cf.

this attribution is that some painters' surnames are the same as those of famous Byzantine families, such as Phokas, Philanthropenos, Apokafkos, or Synadenos.²⁰ However, the surnames of Phokas and Synadenos are witnessed on Crete in numerous sources in the first half of the fourteenth century.²¹ Consequently, if the first Phokas members left Constantinople for Crete by the thirteenth century, the painters by the same name active on Crete during the fifteenth century had no Constantinopolitan training, formation, or such artistic background. As Stavros Maderakes has argued, we cannot presume that non-Cretan painters were responsible for the appearance of the academic style found in ca. 1400 on Crete, since this is not in the written record.²²

In these Veneto-Cretan contracts, we find painters who were residents in Chandax or in its suburbs, but also in villages. For example, Nikolaos Vassalos and the priest Ioannes Frangos resided in the villages of Komes and Pala, respectively. Most of the people who made commissions also resided in Chandax. This is the case with Markos Mouatsos, Daniel Gastreas, and Konstantios Gerardos. Markos Pavlopoulos and

Georgios Piperes were living in the suburbs of Chandax and in the village of Malia, respectively. It is worth noting that, apart from the priest Ioannes Frangos, many other painters listed by Cattapan were connected to the priesthood: Georgios,²³ Nikolaos Philanthropenos, son of the priest Georgios,²⁴ Nikolaos and Vlasios Klontzas, sons of the priest Konstantinos,²⁵ Georgios Phokas, son of the priest Michael,²⁶ Antonios Papadopoulos, son of the priest Basilios,²⁷ and so on,²⁸ while Antonio da Negroponte was a frate.²⁹ Among the painters we also find a person with an additional occupation, the *organista* Gasparino Bembo.³⁰ Among the people who made commissions, we find members from noble Venetian families, such as the Corner, Correr, Venier, and Querini. One of these people, Daniel Gastreas, was a hieromonk, and another one, Markos Pavlopoulos, was a priest.

All contracts of wall paintings published by Cattapan provide a wealth of information about the process of employment and shed light on the details of the agreements between painters and clients. First and foremost, it is possible to inspect the remuneration of the painters and its adjustments throughout a period of 140 years (1331–1470). Evidently, the agreed price depended on various factors, such as the artist's expertise and qualifications, the size of the church, the specific themes to be painted, and the deadline for the completion of the work. In 1331, the price agreed upon between the painter Nikolaos Vassalos and Markos Mouatsos for the countryside Church of Panagia in Varvari in the

M. Bissinger, *Kreta: Byzantinische Wandmalerei* (Munich, 1995), 216, who calls attention to methodological problems with the aforementioned scholarship on this topic.

20 See, for example, Constantoudaki-Kitromilides, "Viaggi di pittori," especially at 713–19 (cf. M. Constadoudaki-Kitromilides, "The Wall-Paintings in the Katholikon of the Saint Neophytos Monastery: Iconography, Artistic Identity, and the Cretan Theophanis in Venetian Cyprus," *Δελτ. Χριστ. Αρχ. Ετ.* 42 [2021]: 197–236, at 217), and M. Vassilaki, "From Constantinople to Candia: Icon Painting in Crete around 1400," in *The Hand of Angelos: An Icon Painter in Venetian Crete*, ed. M. Vassilaki (Farnham, 2010), 58–65.

21 See, for example, C. Gaspare, ed., *Franciscus de Cruce: Νοτάριος στον Χάνδακα, 1338–1339* (Venice, 1999), 160, doc. 207: *Nicolaus Fucha, principalis, habitator in casali Dhionissi* (Nikolaos Pho[u]kas, principal, resident of the village of Dionisi); Gaspare, *Franciscus de Cruce*, 321–22, doc. 467: *Nicolaus Synadino, dictus Dhiaco* (Nikolaos Synadenos, so-called Diakos); and A. Lombardo, ed., *Zaccaria de Fredo: Notaio in Candia (1352–1357)* (Venice, 1968), 53, doc. 76: *Andreas Sinadino aurifex* (Andreas Synadenos, goldsmith). See also A.S.V., *Notai di Candia*, b. 13 [Egidio Valoso], fol. 98v: *Xeno Fucha, habitator casalis Cato Marathiti* (Xenos Pho[u]kas, resident of the village of Kato Marathiti) [act of 7 April 1371], and A.S.V., *Notai di Candia*, b. 273 [Niccolò Tonisto], fol. [66] 67v: *Dimitrius Fucha, habitator casalis Caçaba* (Demetrios Pho[u]kas, resident of the village of Katsaba) [act of 6 November 1387].

22 S.N. Maderakes, "Βυζαντινή ζωγραφική από την Κρήτη στα πρώτα χρόνια του 15ου αιώνα," in *Πεπραγμένα του ΣΤ' διεθνούς Κρητολογικού συνεδρίου* (Chania, 1991), 2:265–315, at 271.

23 Cattapan, "Nuovi elenchi," 204, no. 19.

24 Cattapan, "Nuovi elenchi," 204, no. 30.

25 Cattapan, "Nuovi elenchi," 205, nos. 47–48.

26 Cattapan, "Nuovi elenchi," 206, no. 72.

27 Cattapan, "Nuovi elenchi," 206, no. 75.

28 In no. 84 of Cattapan's list, we find the entry, "Alessandro (Comata) Giorgio, protopapà, vescovo" (Cattapan, "Nuovi elenchi," 206), which is probably based on a document of 27 March 1450 where we actually read the following: *Georgius Alefandro, pinctor, habitator burgi Candide* (Georgios Alefandros, painter, resident of the suburbs of Chandax) (A.S.V., *Notai di Candia*, b. 294 [Luca Zen], fol. 110 [260]r). Thus, the identification with Georgios Alexandros Chomatas, vice-protopapas of Chandax and later Latin bishop of Arkadi on Crete, is erroneous. On Georgios Alexandros Chomatas, see E. Despotakis and T. Ganchou, "Géorgios Alexandros Chomatas, successeur de Dèmètrios Chalkokondylès à la chaire de Grec de l'Université de Padoue (1475/76–1479)," *REB* 76 (2018): 233–65.

29 Cattapan, "Nuovi elenchi," 207, no. 109.

30 Cattapan, "Nuovi elenchi," 205, no. 42.

former province of Pediada was twelve Cretan hyperpera. In 1353, the painter Ioannes Gradenigos demanded sixteen Cretan hyperpera from Daniel Gastreas for his work at the Church of Christ Pantokrator.³¹ Given that it would have taken the painters approximately five months to complete the work—perhaps even fewer³²—such amounts seem relatively fair when compared to the compensation of other contemporary professions that did not require advanced artistic skills, such as shoemaker (*caligarius*), butcher (*beccarius*), or builder (*murarius*), whose yearly wages were around ten hyperpera during the fourteenth century.³³ In the second half of the fourteenth century, the amount requested for the decoration of two countryside churches, St. George in Kyrmousi (1371) and Panagia (*Sancta Maria*) in Malia (*Damalia*) (1399),³⁴ was sixty Cretan hyperpera

each. During the first half of the fifteenth century, the painter's fee seems to fluctuate from seventy (1419) to one hundred hyperpera (1422), while in 1470 the latter sum was received by Georgios Pelegrin for the wall painting of just one composition—the Crucifixion—in the Church of St. Jerome in Chandax. In most cases, the painter was paid in two or three installments.

Two documents reveal the amount of time needed by the painter to complete his work. Angelos Apokafkos pledged to start working on the composition of the Last Judgment on 15 May 1421 and to conclude it by the end of July, if not earlier. The other case is that of Georgios Mavrianos, who, on 28 April 1422, promised to paint images of Christ the Savior and other saints in the Church of the Savior in Kitharida by the end of September, if not earlier. All the contracts imply that the best time to start the work of wall paintings was the beginning of spring at the earliest. Thus, Nikolaos Vassalos was employed on 25 July (and he agreed to start his work within the next fifteen days), Ioannes Gradenigos on 31 July, Georgios Mavrianos on 28 April and 21 May, and Angelos Apokafkos on 1 March. With the exception of Vassalos, there is no mention in the other agreements of the time in which the painter should start his work in loco. On the other hand, in two contracts made on 6 November 1399 and 31 October 1371, the painters pledged to start their work after the day of Resurrection, that is, in the end of March and beginning of April, respectively.³⁵ This practice related to the optimal climatic conditions, that is, to low levels of humidity for the wall treatment.³⁶ Finally, there is one case in which the person who commissioned the work hired two painters to create frescoes in his church. This was the Church of Panagia in Malia, whose decoration Georgios Piperes assigned

31 Since there is no toponym following the Church of Christ Pantokrator, we assume that it was situated in Chandax. Cattapan erroneously transcribed the surname of the hieromonk Gastreas as *Trasthrea*. Certainly, this is the hieromonk Daniel Gastreas whose testament was composed by the notary Giovanni Gerardo on 27 March 1359 (S. McKee, ed., *Wills from Late Medieval Venetian Crete: 1312–1420* [Washington, DC, 1998], 1:208–9, doc. 164). Gerardo also wrote the notarial deed between Gastreas and the painter Gradenigos. Unfortunately, there is no mention of the Church of Christ Pantokrator in his testament.

32 Cf. the case of Georgios Mavrianos, below.

33 E. Santschi, “Contrats de travail et d’apprentissage en Crète Vénitienne au XIV^e siècle d’après quelques notaires,” *SZG* 19 (1969): 34–74, at 70. See also the considerations about the painters’ economic status and activities in fifteenth-century Crete in C. Maltezou, “Το επάγγελμα του ζωγράφου στη βενετοκρατούμενη Κρήτη τον 15ο αιώνα,” in *Μουσείο Μπενάκη* 13–14 (2013/14): 43–55, at 51–53.

34 This church has been identified with reservation by Stella Papadake-Oekland with Panagia Zoodochos Pege, which is situated in the village Damania in the prefecture of Heraklion. As Papadake-Oekland has observed, only a few fresco fragments have been preserved, and their status does not allow for speculations about the identity of the painters or their style (S. Papadake-Oekland, “Από τη ζωή των ζωγράφων στην Κρήτη κατά τους πρώτους αιώνες της Ενετοκρατίας,” in *Πεπραγμένα του Η’ διεθνούς Κρητολογικού συνεδρίου* [Heraklion, 2000], 2.2:155–76, at 158–59, n. 8). On the other hand, Constantoudaki-Kitromilides reads this toponym as “da malia” and proposes its identification with the Church of Panagia in the village of Malia in the former province of Pediada (Constantoudaki-Kitromilides, “Viaggi di pittori,” 712). We consider this hypothesis to be more convincing; see also S. G. Spanakes, *Πόλεις και χωριά της Κρήτης στο πέρασμα των αιώνων (μητροών των οικισμών)*, 3rd ed. (Heraklion, 2006), 2:501, referring to the alternative appellation of Malia as “Demalia,” as mentioned by Francesco Barozzi in 1577. The murals of the church in Malia lack a dedicatory inscription and are unpublished. Despite this, studying them should tell us if they were

indeed painted by Souranas and Synadenos in 1399, as stated in the contract mentioned on p. 250.

35 Easter fell on 6 April in 1371 and on 30 March in 1399; see V. Grumel, *Traité d’études byzantines*, vol. 1, *La chronologie* (Paris, 1958), 310.

36 Cf. the instructions for the art of mural painting of Dionysios of Fourni: Dionysios of Fourni, “Ερμηνεία τῆς ζωγραφικῆς τοῦ τοῖχου, ἥτοι πῶς νὰ ἱστορίζηις εἰς τοῖχον καὶ πῶς νὰ κατασκευάζηις κονδύλια τοῦ τοῖχου,” in *Ερμηνεία τῆς ζωγραφικῆς τέχνης καὶ αἱ κύριαὶ αὐτῆς ἀνέκδοτοι πηγαι, ἐκδομένη μετὰ προλόγου νῦν τὸ πρῶτον πλήρης κατὰ τὸ πρωτότυπον αὐτῆς κείμενον*, ed. A. Papadopoulos-Kerameus (St. Petersburg, 1909), 36–43, and the English translation of P. Hetherington, ed., *The “Painter’s Manual” of Dionysius of Fourni*, 2nd ed. (Torrance, Calif., 1989), 12–15.

to the painters Emmanuel Souranas and Andronikos Synadenos. Among our written sources, this is a unique case in which two painters were hired to work in the same church, and it might relate to the client's desire to have the church decorated as quickly as possible. It is also possible that this double commission was due to an extant *societas* between Souranas and Synadenos, similar to the one between Nikolaos Philanthropenos and Nicola Storlando in 1400.³⁷

Based on the information from the notarial deeds, we can conclude that all work expenses (e.g., for the pigments, which are mentioned in most of the published documents) were covered by the painters themselves and were therefore included in the requested amount. Whenever something was not included in the final price, it was always mentioned separately. For example, Angelos Apokafkos asked Markos Pavlopoulos, the future protopapas of Chandax,³⁸ to provide him the lime and the scaffolding. Ioannes Gradenigos required Daniel Gastreas to provide lime and water for his work, as well as food. By contrast, according to the agreement of 1371 between the painter Ioannes Frangos and Konstantios Gerardos, the scaffolding was to be provided by the painter, not by Gerardos.

In many cases, it is safe to assume that the painter did not work alone. Though the archival documents do not mention this explicitly, it should be considered self-evident for various reasons. First, several notarial deeds indicate that apprentices were entrusted to painters in order to work for them and also learn the art of painting. This is the case of Michael, son of Nikolaos Charchiopoulos, whose father entrusted him to Georgios Mavrianos for ten years (see below, p. 253). Apprentices who learned the art of painting from a teacher-painter who specialized in icon painting did not necessarily leave the latter's workshop in the city

center or the suburbs. However, those teacher-painters who had to leave their permanent residence for distant villages and work in loco for four or five months brought their trainees with them and provided for their needs, as promised to their fathers in the contract of the apprenticeship. According to the documents, the person who made the commission was often obliged to provide food for the painter and, in turn, the painter pledged to provide food for his apprentices who accompanied him to his work.

Specific clauses in the contracts seem to have been relatively frequent. An interesting case is that of the painter Nikolaos Vassalos, whose final work was to be checked and evaluated positively by two other people before receiving his payment. Another case is that of the painter Alexios Apokafkos, who agreed that if he did not complete the work by the predetermined date, the client reserved the right to assign it to other painters at Apokafkos's expense. It is also worth mentioning that in the agreement between the priest and painter Ioannes Frangos and Konstantios Gerardos, the latter did not dictate what subjects were to be painted in the Church of St. George in Kyrmousi. Instead, he asked Frangos to copy subjects from the Church of the Savior in the village of Tylisos (*Delese*)³⁹ and not to leave any interior space without painting. The same contract mentions explicitly that the light blue color (*açuro*) was to be used along with other colors of quality (*aliis bonis coloribus*). The good quality of the colors as a part of the agreement is also mentioned in the contract between Nikolaos Vassalos and Markos Mouatsos in 1331. In the contract of 1353 between Ioannes Gradenigos and Daniel Gastreas, we find explicit mention of the painter's commitment to execute the iconographic program that Gastreas would dictate (*Et teneor facere in dicta ecclesia omnes ystorias quas ordinabis mihi*) (And I am obligated to paint in the aforementioned church all the pictures that you ordered me). This must have been a self-evident condition in other contracts, since all painters were at the service of their clients. For example, in the agreement between the painters Souranas and Synadenos and the church owner Piperes, we read

37 In the agreement between Philanthropenos and Storlando, we read that the painters would jointly run the same workshop (*apothecam*) and share the revenue and expenses for three years. On this document, see M. Constantoudaki-Kitromilides, "Conducere apothecam, in qua exercere artem nostram: Το εργαστήριο ενός βυζαντινού και ενός βενετού ζωγράφου στην Κρήτη," *Byzantina Symmeikta* 14 (2001): 291–300. In the documents of Venetian Crete, the term *societas* is used to describe partnerships between craftsmen, artisans, or peasants. On this term, see C. Gaspares, *Η γη και οι αγρότες στη μεσαιωνική Κρήτη: 13ος–14ος αι.* (Athens, 1997), 44; cf. J. H. Pryor, "The Origins of the *Commenda* Contract," *Speculum* 52 (1977): 5–37.

38 On this person, see in general *PLP* 22084.

39 Most likely, it is about the Church of Christ (also known as Metamorphosis), which still preserves fourteenth-century Byzantine frescoes. On this church, see A. Mylopotamitake, "Βυζαντινά και μεταβυζαντινά μνημεία της επαρχίας Μαλεβιζίου," in *Το Μαλεβίζι από τα προϊστορικά χρόνια μέχρι σήμερα*, ed. N. Psilakes (Heraklion, 1998), 113–144, at 138.

that the painters would have worked in the church following the instructions of Piperes (*et fideliter laborando in ea prout nobis dixeris et ordinaveris*) (and faithfully working in this [church] in accordance with what you have said to us and ordered).

The content of the iconographic program was not always mentioned in the agreements. The contracts between Vassalos and Mouatsos, Gradenigos and Gastreas, Frangos and Gerardos, and Souranas/Synadenos and Piperes do not mention it at all. The agreements that include specific mentions of the content of the iconographic program are those referring to: (a) Georgios Mavrianos, who agreed to paint subjects from the life of Jesus Christ and the Virgin in the Church of Panagia in Kato Symi and images of Christ and other saints in the Church of the Savior in Kitharida; (b) Georgios Pelegrin, hired to paint the Crucifixion in the Church of St. Jerome; and (c) Angelos Apokafkos, hired to paint the Last Judgment in the Church of Panagia of the Angels. We can also observe that the person who made the commission was always the one who owned the church. In all cases, the painter involved in a wall-painting contract addresses the client using the possessive pronouns *ecclesiam tuam*, in *tua ecclesia*, or *ecclesiam . . . positam in casali tuo*. The few exceptions are indirect commissions made by executors empowered to act by the owner's request, such as in the case of Georgios Mavrianos and the executors of Anna Correr, and that of Georgios Pelegrin and Lauro Querini, executor of Mandalucia Querini.

According to Maderakes's reading of the agreement between Ioannes Gradenigos and Daniel Gastreas, the painter pledged to respect the Orthodox iconographic tradition in his work and not include heretical allusions. Maderakes argues that this is a reference to the problem of Western influences on Byzantine art, namely the introduction of Western iconographic motifs.⁴⁰ Maderakes came to this conclusion because of the phrase *bona fide, sine fraude et malo ingenio* (faithfully, without fraud and evil disposition), which he erroneously connected to the Church's iconographic program. However, the phrase was commonly used in the Veneto-Cretan notarial deeds to imply the

satisfactory completion of the work in the context of the agreements.⁴¹ In fact, it refers to the quality of Gradenigos's work and the ensuing success of the agreement, not to the contents of the iconographic program.

Regarding the information provided by the wall-painting commissions published by Cattapan, Maderakes concluded "It is a pity that such pieces of information are relatively few and that we have not been able to identify any monuments that would help us understand the real value of these testimonies."⁴² This is the lacuna that the present article aims to fill. It has three objectives; the first is to link the commissions of Georgios Mavrianos to the churches of St. George in Vrachasi and Panagia in Kato Symi, a connection that has so far remained unnoticed by Cattapan and other scholars. We will show that the names of Mavrianos's clients and the location of the churches to which his work is linked are indicative of the latter's renown in fourteenth- to fifteenth-century Venetian Crete. Our second objective is to present one more contract of employment, this time regarding the painter Konstantinos Gaitanas. The importance of this new document resides in the richness of information it provides. Furthermore, it refers to the well-known Church of the Holy Apostles in Kato Karkasa, where the Cretan hieromonk and scholar Neilos Damilas lived during the late fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries.⁴³ All

41 See, for example, an agreement of 1357 according to which the Jew Ysahac promised to serve for three years as the agent of Kalli: *Promitto tibi ac teneor servire tibi et procurare tua negocia et agenda in civitate et burgo Candide tam in curia quam alibi, prout opus fuerit et sicut michi dixeris et ordinaveris, bona fide, sine fraude . . .* (I promise you and I pledge to assist you and represent you in affairs and obligations in the city center and in the suburbs of Chandax, in the Curia and elsewhere, wherever it may be necessary, and you will tell me and command me, faithfully and without deceit . . .) (N. Tsougarakis, "The Documents of Dominicus Grimani, Notary in Candia [1356–1357]," *DOP* 67 [2013]: 227–89, at 264, doc. 80). See also a contract of apprenticeship stipulated in 1487 where Basileios Lithinos entrusted his son Ioannes to the carpenter Markos Bonos for ten years: *quo toto tempore tibi servire debeat intus, foris, bene et fideliter sine fraude aliqua . . .* (during which time John should serve you at home and outside, good and faithfully, without deceit . . .) (A. van Gemert, ed., *Zuane Longo, publicus notarius Candide et Rethimi: Κατάστιχο 131 [1479–1511/12]*, vol. 1, *Πέθυμνο 1487, Χάνδακας 1479–1511/12* [Heraklion, 2017], 94–95, doc. P25).

42 Maderakes, *Εξω Λαχώνια*, 134, n. 322.

43 On Neilos Damilas, see M. M. Nikolidakes, "Νεῖλος Δαμιλάς" (PhD diss., University of Ioannina, 1981), and E. Despotakis and A. Rigo, "Neilos Damilas, John Climacus and Other Ascetic Authors

40 S. N. Maderakes, *Η εκκλησία του Αρχάγγελου Μιχαήλ στα Έξω Λαχώνια Μεραμπελλού* (Agios Nikolaos, 2000), 134, n. 322.



Fig. 1. Map of Crete. Map courtesy of Wikimedia Commons, with additions by authors.

three churches are situated in eastern Crete (Fig. 1), and their wall paintings are still partially preserved. With the exception of the newly restored Church of St. George in Vrachasi, the wall paintings in Kato Symi and Kato Karkasa are unknown or have received little attention. Thus, our third objective is to present and discuss them here for the first time in order to place the work of Mavrianos and Gaitanas in the context of contemporary Palaeologan and Cretan art and to investigate their work with respect to the information given by the notarial deeds. The analysis of the pictorial program, iconography, and style of their church decorations will reveal to what extent the stipulations of the relevant contracts were implemented by the painters and whether the information transmitted by the documents can be confirmed by the wall paintings.

Georgios Mavrianos and the Church of St. George in Vrachasi

Three archival documents are linked to the artistic activity of Georgios Mavrianos in eastern Crete, while a fourth one demonstrates that he was an established painter since at least 1390.

The earliest information we possess for the surname “Mavrianos” (*Mauriano*) on Crete is limited to

two painters listed by Cattapan, “Mauriano Frangulo (1367–1383)” and “Mauriano Giorgio (1389–1420).”⁴⁴ Both are mentioned as residents of the city of Chandax, but Cattapan does not state if they were related. Some earlier testimonies connect this surname to other locations, such as Constantinople, Chalkidiki, and Serres.⁴⁵ On Crete, the name appears in the dedicatory inscription of the Church of Saints Constantine and Helen in Voukolies, which dates to the beginning of the fifteenth century.⁴⁶ The inscription mentions among the donors who contributed to the erection and decoration of the church a certain Ioannes Mavrianos and a certain Georgios whose surname can be reconstructed as Mavrianos. It is unknown if he is the same person as the painter mentioned by Cattapan.

The earliest document published by Cattapan concerning the activity of Mavrianos is a contract of

⁴⁴ Cattapan, “Nuovi elenchi,” 204, nos. 23–24.

⁴⁵ *PLP* 17409–12, 17414–16, 17418–19.

⁴⁶ Gerola, *Monumenti veneti*, 4:414, no. 10. The dates 1452–1462 proposed by Gerola cannot be correct. Today, only the first two letters from the date are still legible. A series of graffiti dating from before 1452 (the earliest is from 1416; see D. Tsougarakes and E. Aggelomate-Tsougarake, *Σύνταγμα (Corpus) χαραγμάτων εκκλησιών και μονών της Κρήτης* [Athens, 2015], 92–93, no. 18) points to a date at the beginning of the fifteenth century. Moreover, the hand of the scribe is identical to that found at the Church of Archangel Michael in Prines, which is dated 1410. For the correct dating, also supported by stylistic criteria, see Tsamakda, *Die griechischen Inschriften*.

in Late Medieval Crete (14th–15th Centuries),” in *The Ladder of John of Sinai*, ed. P. Van Deun and M. Venetskov (Leuven, forthcoming).

apprenticeship from the year 1390 (Appendix, doc. 1).⁴⁷ On 11 February, Nikolaos Charchiopoulos, resident of the village of Megalo Chorio (*Megachorio*) in the area of Hierapetra,⁴⁸ entrusted his son, Michael, to Georgios Mavrianos for ten years to learn the art of painting. As was customary, the teacher was required to provide lodging, clothing, footwear, and maintenance for the apprentice.⁴⁹ In exchange, Michael was to be at Mavrianos's service, assisting him with his work and thus learning the art of painting himself. Although this notarial act has all the characteristics of a common contract of apprenticeship, we should underline that, unlike similar contracts, this one is a contract of both adoption and apprenticeship, an extremely rare case, as Elisabeth Santschi has observed.⁵⁰ This contract indicates that in 1390 Georgios Mavrianos was both a middle-aged painter in Chandax and an artist already known beyond the borders of the capital.

Another document of 27 July 1404 mentions Georgios Mavrianos as a guarantor in a prenuptial agreement between Maria, widow of the priest Demetrios Kornaros, and Ioannes (*Zanachius*) Kornaros, for the latter's marriage to Eleni, daughter of the aforementioned Maria. At the end of the notarial deed, we read:

*Ad hec autem, manifestum facio ego, Georgius Mavriano, pinctor, habitator Candide, cum meis heredibus, tibi, suprascripto Zanachio et tuis heredibus, quia constituo me tibi plecium pro suprascripta papadia, socru tua, de tota repromissa et donis suprascriptis solvendis et attendendis tibi ad terminum suprascriptum . . .*⁵¹

47 Cattapan, "Nuovi elenchi," 218, doc. 11.

48 According to Gaspare's research, this village was close to Giannitsi (*Ianizi* or *Ianiçi*) (C. Gaspare, *Catastici feudorum Crete: Catasticum sexterii Dorsoduri; 1227–1418* [Athens, 2004], 1:159; 2:436–39, docs. 817–23), which is currently named Vainia, and is in southeastern Crete, very close to Hierapetra.

49 See all contracts of apprenticeship published in Cattapan, "Nuovi elenchi," 218–24, docs. 10 and 12–24, along with those published by Cattapan, "Nuovi documenti," 44–45, docs. 7–9. The same custom of providing for the apprentice was present in contracts of apprenticeship of most arts in Venetian Crete (see Santschi, "Contrats de travail," 39).

50 Santschi, "Contrats de travail," 40.

51 A.S.V., *Notai di Candia*, b. 23 [Andrea Cauco], quad. 1, fol. 16 [48]r. This act is followed by another one in which the mother of the aforesaid Maria, the nun Anixia Tourkopoula, guarantees Mavrianos that her daughter will grant all gifts promised to Ioannes Kornaros.

With regard to this, I, Georgios Mavrianos, painter, resident of Chandax, with my successors, make public to you, the aforementioned Ioannes and to your successors, that I make myself your guarantor for the aforementioned priest's wife, your mother-in-law, for the whole dowry and for the aforementioned gifts, already granted and to be granted to you, at the aforementioned deadline . . .

The latest document referring to Georgios Mavrianos is an agreement of a wall-painting commission of 28 April 1422 (Appendix, doc. 4). This document was previously published by Cattapan, though with errors that significantly alter its content.⁵² According to this document, on 28 April 1422, the painter Georgios Mavrianos, resident of Chandax, was employed by the executors of the testament of Anna Correr to paint the frescoes in the Church of the Savior in Kitharida with all work expenses covered by the painter himself. This church was in the middle of other churches situated in the same area. The contract mentions painting images of Christ the Savior and some other saints on which Mavrianos and the executors had already agreed. Mavrianos was to complete his work by September of the same year, if not earlier. The price agreed upon for his work was one hundred hyperpera, an amount that Anna Correr had left for the wall paintings in that church.

The commission of Byzantine frescoes in the area of Kitharida—along with the mention of the precise amount of one hundred hyperpera—is reminiscent of the will of Anna Correr, widow of the Venetian noble Marco Correr, whose testament was redacted by the notary Giovanni Dono on 19 October 1418.⁵³ From Anna's testament, we learn that the executors were Symeon Greco, his wife, Margarita, and Maria, widow of the Venetian noble Tommaso Salamon. During the

52 Cattapan, "Nuovi elenchi," 230–31, doc. 32. Cattapan transcribed erroneously: (a) the date (18, instead of 28 April 1422); (b) the painter's name (*Mancuso*, instead of *Mavriano*); (c) the testator's surname (*Cornario*, instead of *Corrario*); (d) the place where the church was situated (*Chitanda*, instead of *Chitharida*); and (e) the number of subjects to be painted (*figuram Solemnis Salvatoris*, instead of *figuras Solemnis Salvatoris*).

53 E. Papadake, ed., *Johannes Dono, νοτάριος Χάνδακα, 1416–1422* (Heraklion, 2018), 157–62, doc. 40 [74]; cf. E. Papadake, "Η παράδοση του βίου του οσίου Ιωσήφ Σαμάκου και η εποχή της δράσης του στο Χάνδακα," *Θησαυρίσματα* 29 (1999): 109–62, at 137–40, doc. 4.

late years of her life, Anna Correr was a resident in the monastery of Kitharida, namely the monastery of Kyria Eleousa.⁵⁴ As Eirene Papadake has argued, Anna Correr was the wealthiest testator among those recorded in the registers of Giovanni Dono.⁵⁵ In her testament, she left one hundred hyperpera for the execution of the wall paintings in the aforementioned church, that is, the katholikon of Kyria Eleousa's monastery (*Item dimitto yperpera centum pro pictura fienda in dicta ecclesia pro anima mea*) (Moreover, I leave one hundred hyperpera for a painting to be made in the aforementioned church for my soul).

In contrast to what we read in the testament, the agreement between Georgios Mavrianos and the executors indicates that Anna Correr left one hundred hyperpera for the execution of wall paintings in the Church of the Savior and not for that of Kyria Eleousa. The Church of the Savior has not been preserved, but that of Kyria Eleousa, whose frescoes are unpublished, is still standing in the area of Kitharida. Two more churches were spotted by Gerola in the same area; one was dedicated to St. Anthony, while the other's dedication remains unknown.⁵⁶ At this point we can assume that the latter was once the Church of the Savior, which was located—as the document of 1422 attests—among other churches in that area, likely those of Kyria Eleousa and St. Anthony.

The Document on the Church of St. George in Vrachasi

On 2 August 1401, the painter Georgios Mavrianos, a resident of Chandax, acknowledged the receipt of twenty-three hyperpera from Emanuele Venier, also a resident of Chandax (Appendix, doc. 2). This amount constituted the rest of a sum of 120 hyperpera that, according to a juridical decision, Venier was obliged to pay Mavrianos for the latter's work in the Church of St. George in *Vraghassi*. Cattapan mistakenly transcribed the word

Vraghassi as *Veargassi*,⁵⁷ and this is why the church mentioned in the document was never located and identified. This toponym certainly refers to the well-known village of Vrachasi, which Veneto-Cretan documents designate as *Vracasio*, *Vrachassi*, *Vraghassi*, and *Vagrassi*.⁵⁸ This mural-painting commission refers thus to the katholikon of the St. George Vrachasiotis monastery in the former province of Merambelo in the prefecture of Lasithi.

The document speaks indirectly of a commission for the execution of wall paintings. The sum of 120 hyperpera seems relatively high when compared to other payments agreed upon in the same period, such as that of Emmanuel Souranas and Andronikos Synadenos, who were to receive a total of sixty hyperpera for their work in Malia in 1399.

This is a unique case in which an agreement between a painter and a client ends up at court. Unfortunately, since this is not a document of a wall-painting commission but an echo of a preexisting contract between Georgios Mavrianos and Emanuele Venier, it is impossible to determine the nature of their dispute. Based on what we have seen above with regard to the terms included in a wall-painting commission contract, an agreement could be easily violated in several ways, such as the materials provided by the painter or the client, the date by which the frescoes should be finished, the subjects chosen, and so on. It seems that Emanuele Venier refused to pay off the total sum of 120 hyperpera agreed upon for the creation of the frescoes at St. George in Vrachasi to Georgios Mavrianos, or maybe a part thereof.

The noble surname “Venier” (*Venerio*) belongs to one of the most ancient Venetian families, whose members were sent to colonize Crete at the beginning of the thirteenth century.⁵⁹ A fifteenth-century document mentions Emanuele Venier as the owner of Vrachasi.⁶⁰

54 For the history of this monastery, see D. Tsougarakes and E. Aggelomate-Tsougarake, “Τα γυναικεία ορθόδοξα μοναστήρια του Χάνδακα και της ευρύτερης περιοχής του κατά τη Βενετοκρατία,” *Μεσαιωνικά και Νέα Ελληνικά* 12 (2016): 9–132, esp. 29–31; T. Detorakes, “Το μοναστήρι της Ελεούσας στην Κρήτη: Ειδήσεις των πηγών,” in *Βενετοκρατικά Μελετήματα (1971–1994)* (Heraklion, 1996), 277–83; and N. Psilakes, *Μοναστήρια και ερημητήρια της Κρήτης* (Heraklion, 2002), 1:155–62.

55 Papadake, *Johannes Dono*, 64–65.

56 Gerola, *Monumenti veneti*, 4:502, no. 6, and Gerola and Lassithiotakes, *Τοπογραφικός κατάλογος*, 70, no. 423.

57 See Cattapan, “Nuovi elenchi,” 226, 232.

58 Gaspares, *Catastici feudorum Crete*, 1:165. For further citations, see Spanakes, *Πόλεις και χωριά*, 1:202.

59 On this topic, see Gaspares, *Catastici feudorum Crete*, 1:19–57. Members of the Venier family are attested in all documents concerning the first Venetian arrivals to Crete (G. L. F. Tafel and G. M. Thomas, eds., *Urkunden zur älteren Handels- und Staatsgeschichte der Republik Venedig mit besonderer Beziehung auf Byzanz und die Levante*, 2nd rev. ed. [Amsterdam, 1964], 2:134, doc. 229; 238, doc. 263; 478, doc. 322).

60 A.S.V., *Notai di Candia*, b. 23 [Andrea Cauco], prot. 1, fol. 15 [47]v [act of 2 July 1404].

Other sources too connect the surname “Venier” to Vrachasi; the earliest can be traced back to 1352 and refers to a certain Marco Venier (*Marcus Venerio, habitator casalis Vracassi*) (Marco Venier, resident of the village of Vrachasi).⁶¹ Moreover, in 1391, *Andrea Venerio quondam Marci de Vrachasi* (Andrea Venier, son of the late Marco Venier of Vrachasi) asked permission from the local Venetian authorities for Ioannikios Skordiles to leave Crete in order to get ordained.⁶²

Archival evidence rarely refers to the religious identity of the individuals in Venetian Crete, especially before the Council of Ferrara–Florence in 1439.⁶³

61 Lombardo, *Zaccaria de Fredo*, 24, doc. 27.

62 E. Santschi, *Régestes des arrêts civils et des mémoriaux (1363–1399) des archives du duc de Crète* (Venice, 1976), 313, doc. 1398; cf. Psilakes, *Μοναστήρια*, 1:342, and Spanakes, *Πόλεις και χωριά*, 1:202. Until the end of the fifteenth century, prospective priests had to reach the Venetian colonies of Maina, Methone, or Corone in Peloponnese to get ordained (see N. V. Tomadakes, “Οἱ Ὀρθόδοξοι παπᾶδες ἐπὶ Ἑνετοκρατίας καὶ ἡ χειροτονία αὐτῶν,” *Κρ.Χρον.* 13 [1959]: 39–72). Similar acts of permission were published by M. Chairete, “Νέα στοιχεία περὶ τῆς χειροτονίας Ὀρθοδόξων ιερῶν Κρήτης ἐπὶ βενετοκρατίας,” in *Πεπραγμένα τοῦ Γ’ διεθνoῦς Κρητολογικοῦ συνεδρίου* (Athens, 1974), 2:333–41.

63 After 1439, the receptiveness shown by the Catholics to Orthodoxy must have apparently been a recurring phenomenon in the Levant and especially in Venetian Crete, where Greeks and Latins coexisted since the beginning of the thirteenth century. This fact provoked the reaction of Pope Nicholas V, who issued a bull addressed to his delegate in the Levant on 6 September 1448. According to the bull’s content, the pope was surprised by the conversion of the Catholics into the rite of the Greeks, and this was something that the Council of Florence never permitted. For this reason, the “inquisitor” was to suppress this practice and, if necessary, benefit from the assistance of the political authorities (*Bullarum diplomatum et privilegiorum sanctorum Romanorum Pontificum*, vol. 5, *Taurinensis editio locupletior facta collectione novissima plurium brevium, epistolarum, decretorum actorumque S. Sedis a s. Leone Magno usque ad praesens: Clemens X [ab. an. MDCLXX ad ann. MDCLXXVI]* [Torino, 1860], 100–101, doc. 2). The pope’s concerns were justified given that at least since 1449 we encounter in the archival material Cretan priests performing liturgical services for Venetian nobles in Chandax. This is the case exposed by a notarial deed of 7 March 1449, according to which the priest Ioannes Tsengas received a sum from Marieta, *filie quondam viri nobilis ser Iohannis Gradonico, quondam domini Thome* (daughter of the late nobleman Sir Giovanni Gradenigo, son of the late Tommaso), for commemorations for her mother and grandmother, which were held on Saturday and forty days after the funeral (*sabatiatico and sarandamero*) (A.S.V., *Notai di Candia*, b. 246 bis [Giovanni Sevastò], fol. 47v). The noble origin of Marieta is evident in the use of the epithets *nobilis* and *domini* for her father Giovanni and her grandfather Tommaso (on this topic, see K. Lambrinos, “Ἡ κοινωνικὴ διάρθρωση στὴ βενετικὴ Κρήτη: Ἱεραρχίες, ορολογία καὶ κατάλογοι κοινωνικῆς θέσης,” *Κρ.Χρον.* 31 [2011]: 221–39). More

Therefore, it would be risky to make speculations about Venier’s religious identity based on his connection to the Orthodox monastery of St. George in Vrachasi. It is certain that countryside churches or monasteries like St. George Vrachasiotis were frequented by Orthodox peasants—residents of the village that constituted the core of the feud⁶⁴—who were at the service of the Venetian feudatory, in this case of Emanuele Venier.

The Church of St. George in Vrachasi

ARCHITECTURE

The katholikon of the monastery,⁶⁵ dedicated to St. George, was originally a single-aisled edifice with a barrel vault.⁶⁶ The church was initially lower than it is today. A transverse arch divides it into two bays. The church was erected over an older building. Parts of this building, in all probability an older church with wall paintings,⁶⁷ were spotted under the foundations of the north wall after an excavation. The quatrefoil window high in the western wall is original, while the window in the northern wall was likely added later. The cylindrical apse in the east has a narrow window. In 1558, according to an inscription,⁶⁸ a three-story bell tower was erected to the west, and a large arch was opened in the western wall, connecting the church to it. In 1592 a second nave

examples of Cretan priests performing liturgical services for Venetian nobles are found in E. Despotakis, *John Plousiadenos (1423?–1500): A Time-Space Geography of His Life and Career* (Leuven, 2020), 48.

64 Gaspares, *Η γη και οι αγρότες*, 58.

65 On the monastery of Vrachasi, see Gerola, *Monumenti veneti*, 2:363–65 (on the bell tower), 3:184; N. Platakis, “Παλαιές εκκλησίες στο Βραχάσι,” *Αμάλθεια* 10.3 (1972): 97–120, at 111–17; T. Detorakes, “Δύο παλαιά μοναστήρια στο Βραχάσι,” *Κρητολογία* 14–15 (1982): 57–75; Psilakes, *Μοναστήρια*, 1:341–51; D. Chronake, “Μοναστήρια της περιοχής επάνω Μεραμπέλλου κατά τη Βενετοκρατία,” *Θησαυρίσματα* 27 (1997): 231–72, at 249; M. G. Andrianakes and K. D. Giapitsoglou, *Χριστιανικά μνημεία της Κρήτης* (Heraklion, 2012), 203; D. Chronake, “Ο ναός του αγίου Γεωργίου Βραχασιώτη: Εργασίες στερέωσης και απόκαταστάσεως,” in *Αρχαιολογικό έργο Κρήτης: Πρακτικά της 4ης συνάντησης, Ρέθυμνο, 24–27 Νοεμβρίου 2016*, ed. P. Karanastase, A. Tzigounake, and C. Tsigonake (Rethymno, 2020), 1:610–28; and G. Moschove, “Νέα στοιχεία για το καθολικό της Μονής του Αγίου Γεωργίου Βραχασιώτη: Η αρχιτεκτονική και ο τοιχογραφικός διάκοσμος του ναού,” in *Αρχαιολογικό έργο Κρήτης: Πρακτικά της 4ης συνάντησης, Ρέθυμνο, 24–27 Νοεμβρίου 2016*, 1:597–609.

66 On the architecture and the building stages of the church, see Moschove, “Νέα στοιχεία,” 598–601.

67 Moschove, “Νέα στοιχεία,” 600, 607.

68 Gerola, *Monumenti veneti*, 4:518, no. 3.

Fig. 2.
Church of St. George,
Vrachasi, sanctuary.
Photo by authors.



dedicated to St. Demetrios was added to the south.⁶⁹ Two arches were opened on the southern wall of the old church, connecting the two chapels. The two sanctuaries were also connected by a further opening. Finally, the height of the walls of the old church was increased. Today, the entrance to the katholikon is through the bell tower in the northern nave and through the southern wall of the southern nave.

THE WALL PAINTINGS

Only the northern chapel was decorated with wall paintings,⁷⁰ which are unfortunately very fragmentarily preserved.⁷¹ The majority of the murals were destroyed during the aforementioned alterations. We do not know how comprehensive the original iconographic program was; what remains is the following.

In the sanctuary in the right part of the half-cylinder of the apse, there are a few remnants of at least two concelebrating bishops (Fig. 2). The left bishop, flanking the altar, can be identified as St. Basil of Caesarea due to his dark hair and long beard.⁷² He is holding a scroll with a variant of a text taken from his liturgy:⁷³ ΚΑΙ ΠΙΗCΟΝ | ΜΕΝ ΑΡΤΟΝ | ΤΟΥ[ΤΟΝ.] ΑΥΤΩ Τ[Ο] | [ΤΙ]ΜΙΟΝ CΩ | ΜΑ ΤΟΥ Κ[ΥΡΙΟ]Υ Κ[ΑΙ] | [ΘΕΟ]Υ Κ[ΑΙ] C[ΩΤΗΡΟ]C ΗΜ | ΩΝ Ι[ΗCΟ]Υ Χ[ΡΙCΤΟ]Υ. | ΑΜΙΝ ΤΟ ΔΕ | ΕΝ ΤΩ ΠΟΤ | ΙΠΙ[Ω] . . . (And make this bread be the honorable Body of our Lord and God and Savior Jesus Christ. Amen . . . in the cup . . .). The right bishop holds a scroll, the text of which is illegible.

69 On the inscription above the entrance of this chapel with the date of its construction, see Gerola, *Monumenti veneti*, 4:518, no. 4.

70 When no bibliographical references are cited for the comparative material discussed, this means that the monuments or parts thereof are unpublished, and the comparison relies on personal observations.

71 The wall paintings are first mentioned by Platakis, "Παλαιές εκκλησίες," 116; for their publication after the restoration, see Moschov, "Νέα στοιχεία," 601–5.

72 On the iconography of St. Basil, see A. Chatzinikolaou, "Heilige," *RBK* 2:1041–48; J. Myslivec, "Basilius der Große," *LChrI* 5:337–41; and I. Spatharakis, *Byzantine Wall Paintings of Crete*, vol. 1, *Rethymnon Province* (London, 1999), 322.

73 In fact, the text also contains elements from the Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom: see P. N. Trempelas, *Αἱ τρεῖς λειτουργίαι κατὰ τοὺς ἐν Ἀθήναις κώδικας* (Athens, 1982), 114–15, 183, and F. E. Brightman, *Liturgies, Eastern and Western, Being the Texts Original or Translated of the Principal Liturgies of the Church*, vol. 1, *Eastern Liturgies*, 2nd ed. (Oxford, 1967), 330; cf. G. Babić and C. Walter, "The Inscriptions upon Liturgical Rolls in Byzantine Apse Decoration," *REB* 34 (1976): 269–80, at 271, nos. 18–19.



Fig. 3. Church of St. George, Vrachasi, St. Romanos. Photo by authors.

On the eastern wall to the right of the apse is a tonsured deacon holding a censer and a pyxis. He has a brown beard and wears white and red vestments (Fig. 3). He is not accompanied by an inscription but can be identified as St. Romanos on iconographic grounds.⁷⁴

In the naos, only parts of the northern and western walls have preserved frescoes (Fig. 4, and below, Fig. 6). In the lower zone of the western part of the northern wall, there is a row of full-figure saints, and above them

are remnants of the personifications of the Earth and the Sea, which formed part of the Last Judgment.⁷⁵ Both of them are fragmentarily preserved. On the left there

74 On the iconography of St. Romanos, see G. Kaster, "Romanus der Melode von Konstantinopel," *LChrI* 8:279–80; for Crete, see K. D. Kalokyres, *Αἱ βυζαντινὰ τοιχογραφία τῆς Κρήτης* (Athens, 1957), 119–20; Spatharakis, *Rethymnon*, 329; and V. Tsamakda, *Die Panagia-Kirche und die Erzengelkirche in Kakodiki: Werkstattgruppen, kunst- und kulturhistorische Analyse byzantinischer Wandmalerei des 14. Jhs. auf Kreta* (Vienna, 2012), 61–63.

75 On the iconography of the Last Judgment, see B. Brenk, "Weltgericht," *LChrI* 4:513–23; B. Brenk, *Tradition und Neuerung in der christlichen Kunst des ersten Jahrtausends: Studien zur Geschichte des Weltgerichtsbildes* (Vienna, 1966); and D. Milošević, *Das Jüngste Gericht* (Recklinghausen, 1963). For Crete, see Kalokyres, *Αἱ βυζαντινὰ τοιχογραφία*, 101–4; S. N. Maderakes, "Ἡ κόλαση καὶ οἱ ποινές των κολασμένων σὺν θέμᾳ τῆς Δευτέρας Παρουσίας στὶς ἐκκλησίες τῆς Κρήτης," *Τόμαρ ἐκ Πέτρας* 1 (1978): 185–236; 2 (1979): 21–80; 3 (1981): 51–130; Spatharakis, *Rethymnon*, 314–20; and Tsamakda, *Kakodiki*, 192–210. See also more recently Hell in the Byzantine World: *A History of Art and Religion in Venetian Crete and the Eastern Mediterranean*, vol. 2, *A Catalogue of the Cretan Material*, ed. A. Lymberopoulou and R. Duits (Cambridge, 2020). The catalogue of hell scenes in this publication is incomplete.



Fig. 4. Church of St. George, Vrachasi, northern wall. Photo by G. Moschov.

is probably a lion, on which the Earth is sitting. Behind the lion's tail there is a snake and other animals with body parts in their mouths. In the foreground the dead, wrapped in shrouds, are rising from their tombs. In the second scene, only fish and other sea creatures with limbs in their mouths are discernible, while the personification of the Sea riding on a large fish is almost totally destroyed.

Below these scenes, there are four standing saints. They are placed under arches decorated with green branches, supported by columns with capitals. All of them are clad in luxurious garments. Their identification is difficult because the accompanying inscriptions have been lost. Beginning from the west, the first saint is beardless and dressed in a purple himation and red chiton. He holds the cross of a martyr. He has been identified as St. Tryphon, but this is not certain.⁷⁶ The second

⁷⁶ Moschov, "Néa stoxeía," 602, fig. 6–6a. On the iconography of this saint, see B. Böhm, "Tryphon von Phrygien," *LChriI* 8:501–2, and Spatharakis, *Rethymnon*, 340.

saint (Fig. 5), a bearded man clad in green and red and wearing dark headgear, is also probably a martyr, since he likely also held a martyr's cross with his right hand, like the previous saint.⁷⁷ The third figure is another martyr, a beardless man wearing red and green clothes. The fourth saint, represented on a smaller scale,⁷⁸ is damaged in the upper and right parts. He wears green

⁷⁷ Moschov, "Néa stoxeía," 602, suggests an identification with St. Anthony. However, he regularly holds in his right hand a staff or makes a speech gesture while holding an open scroll in his left hand; see A. Chatzinikolaou, "Heilige," *RBK* 2:1061–69; E. Sauser, "Antonius Abbas (der Große), Stern der Wüste, Vater der Mönche," *LChriI* 5:205–17; and Spatharakis, *Rethymnon*, 340.

⁷⁸ This difference in scale can be noted in several churches for saints placed below consoles of transverse arches, such as at St. John the Baptist in Kritsa (1360); see M. Katifore, "Ο ναός του Αγίου Ιωάννη Προδρόμου στην Κριτσαά Μεραμπέλου," in *Αρχαιολογικό έργο Κρήτης: Πρακτικά της 3ης συνάντησης. Ρέθυμνο, 5–8 Δεκεμβρίου 2013*, ed. P. Karanastase, A. Tzigounake, and C. Tsigonake (Rethymno, 2015), 2:595–606, fig. 2.



Fig. 5.
Church of St. George,
Vrachasi, unknown saint.
Photo by authors.

and red garments and holds a cross in his right hand and a small goat in his left one. He can be safely identified as St. Mamas.⁷⁹ The adjacent saint to the right was probably on horseback, as suggested by the traces of a snake and a horse's tail. This was possibly the patron saint of the church.

79 Cf. Moschov, "Νέα στοιχεία," 602. On the iconography of St. Mamas, see G. Kaster, "Mam(m)as (Mamantos, Mammetos, Mammès) von Cäsarea," *LChrI* 7:483–85; Kalokyres, *Αἱ βυζαντινὰ τοιχογραφία*, 122; Spatharakis, *Rethymnon*, 342; and Tsamakda, *Kakodiki*, 219–20.

The wall paintings on the western wall (Fig. 6) were partially destroyed when the bell tower was added in 1558, and a large arch was built into the left side of the wall. The upper half of the wall is decorated with the Last Judgment.⁸⁰ What remains is the depiction of the seated apostles and the angels behind them, both following the standard iconography of the scene. They are holding open books on their laps with various texts, but not all of them correspond to those prescribed in

80 Moschov, "Νέα στοιχεία," 603–4, fig. 7–7a.



Fig. 6. Church of St. George, Vrachasi, western wall. Photo by G. Moschove.

the *Hermeneia* of Dionysios of Fourni.⁸¹ The apostles turn toward the center of the composition, where we see the Deësis with the enthroned Christ in a mandorla in the middle surrounded by angels and flanked by the Virgin and St. John the Forerunner. Above the Deësis and the Tribunal of the Apostles, there are two flying angels flanking the window. They carry the unfurled heaven, which is placed above the window.⁸²

The depiction of a male figure has been partially preserved on the right part of the lower half of the western wall (Fig. 7). The man is depicted frontally and has his hands crossed on his chest. He wears a white

himation, from which only the cuff is visible, a dark blue-green mantle,⁸³ and black pointed shoes. His face is missing, but his red hair is remarkable. In the upper-right corner, the half-figure of Christ appears, blessing the standing figure from heaven. This feature is rare among the extant Cretan portraits of individuals.⁸⁴ To the right of the figure there are plants.

83 Moschove, “Néa στοιχέα,” 608, suggests that the deceased is wearing black garments and therefore would have been a priest. However, A. Mylopotamitake, “Παρατηρήσεις στις τοιχογραφημένες παραστάσεις των κτητόρων-αφιερωτών της Κρήτης,” in *Ειλαπινή: Τόμος τιμητικός για τον καθηγητή Νικόλαο Πλάτωνα* (Heraklion, 1987), 1:139–50, at 143, asserts that dark garments are a sign of advanced age.

84 Compare this with an image in the western wall in the naos of the Church of the Savior in Meskla (1303) showing the donor with the church model turning to the blessing Christ, who appears in the upper-left corner in heaven: J. Schmidt, *Die spätbyzantinischen Wandmalereien des Theodor Daniel und Michael Veneris: Eine Untersuchung zu den Werken und der Vernetzung zweier kretischer Maler* (Mainz, 2020), 71–72. Another parallel can be found in the Church of the Holy Apostles in Kavousi in the depiction of a *presbyterissa* (layer of the fourteenth century). In the upper-right corner of

81 On the sayings of the apostles in this composition, see Papadopoulos-Kerameus, *Ἑρμηνεία τῆς ζωγραφικῆς*, 287. For some examples of the apostles holding texts in the same context, see Spatharakis, *Rethymnon*, 317.

82 A parallel for this interesting composition can be found in the Church of the Savior in Potamies (last quarter of the fourteenth century); see C. Ranoutsaki, *Die Fresken der Soterias Christos-Kirche bei Potamies: Studie zur byzantinischen Wandmalerei auf Kreta im 14. Jahrhundert* (Munich, 1992), 106, fig. 30.



Fig. 7.
Church of St. George,
Vrachasi, portrait of the
deceased Veneris. Photo
by authors.

The plants, symbolizing paradise and in combination with the gesture of the figure, point to a portrait of a deceased person. This is confirmed by the accompanying inscription, which reads: +ΕΚΗΜΗΘΗ Ο ΔΟΥΛΟΣ Τ[ΟΥ ΘΕΟΥ] . . . Ο ΒΕΝΕΡΙΣ ΕΤΟC ιςλ . . . | ΜΑΙΟ [.]Γ' (The slave of God, . . . Veneris, passed

away in the year 6900 . . . May [.]3).⁸⁵ Veneris can be identified with “ser Hemanueli Venerio” mentioned in the document of 1401 (see Appendix, doc. 2). This portrait and its inscription offer additional support for the identification of the church as the one referred to in the

the image field, the beams of a mandorla are still visible, which probably also contained a depiction of the blessing Christ; see Andrianakes and Giapitsoglou, *Χριστιανικά μνημεία*, 225.

85 The inscription was first published by D. Tsougarakes and E. Aggelomate-Tsougarake, “Ανέκδοτα χαράγματα και επιγραφές από μονές και ναούς της Κρήτης,” in *Ενδύμνησις Ν. Παναγιωτάκη* (Heraklion, 2000), 681–732, at 717, no. 435. On line 3, the authors read ΜΑΪΟΥ Γ'; see also Moschove, “Νέα στοιχεία,” 604, for a slightly different reading.

document published by Cattapan. Since, according to this document, Emanuele was the owner of the church and commissioned its wall paintings, it is reasonable to assume that he is the patron depicted on the western wall. Based on the inscription alone, in which the year is preserved fragmentarily, his death can be dated between 6900–6999, that is, 1392–1491. The document of 1401 serves as terminus ante quem for the murals but predates the death of Emanuele Venier, which can be theoretically placed between 1401 und 1491. We cannot exclude the possibility that another family member is depicted here.⁸⁶

Venier's portrait is placed directly under the Tribunal of the Apostles on the right side of the composition, where personifications of the Sea and the Earth and/or the representations of hell and the damned are normally located.⁸⁷ Since the personifications were painted on the northern wall, as already stated, one would expect here images of hell. It is therefore possible that the portrait of Venier was created later than the surrounding frescoes (after his death), replacing the aforementioned scenes. A narrow strip between Venier's portrait and the Tribunal of the Apostles strengthens this possibility. What was originally depicted there is difficult to know. In its present state, the current overall composition and organization of the wall makes little sense. We suggest that this strip is what remains of the original part of the Last Judgment. In any case, the inclusion of this portrait in the composition of the Last Judgment communicates Venier's wish for the salvation of his soul and ensures the commemoration of

his name during the liturgy.⁸⁸ He was probably buried in the church.⁸⁹

The document of 1401 informs us that the painter was Georgios Mavrianos. As Georgia Moschove has already observed, the wall paintings are stylistically not homogeneous.⁹⁰ Although there is uniformity in the use of predominantly green-turquoise and red colors, there are differences in the execution of the seated apostles and angels of the Last Judgment (Fig. 8) on the one hand, and the standing saints on the northern wall as well as the deacon on the eastern wall on the other (Fig. 3). The latter were painted more carefully and with faces rendered more plastically. The garments of the standing saints fall more naturally than those of the seated apostles, which are rendered in a more linear way, sometimes forming geometric patterns. On the other hand, the angels unrolling the sky are rendered in a classicizing style. The paintings of the western wall share stylistic similarities with those in the Panagia Keragrammeni in Kapistri (beginning of the fifteenth century), but attributing the paintings to the same artist requires a more thorough investigation.⁹¹

The different styles between standing saints and narrative scenes are a frequent feature in the decoration of churches. It might be the result of the different nature and dimensions of the depicted subjects, or it suggests the collaboration of more than one painter,

86 It was not unusual to build churches on the occasion of a family member's death. For a case on Crete attested through inscriptions, see Gerola, *Monumenti veneti*, 4:484–85, nos. 11–12; for a characteristic example from Rhodes, in which a couple built a church in memory of their three dead children, see M. Acheimastou-Potamianou, "Οι τοιχογραφίες της οικογένειας Βαρδοάνη στον Άγιο Νικόλαο στο Φουντουκλί της Ρόδου," in *Θωράκιον: Αφιέρωμα στη μνήμη του Παύλου Λαζαρίδη* (Athens, 2004), 247–62.

87 For the placement of representations of the Last Judgment within Cretan churches, see a brief mention in A. Lymberopoulou, "Hell on Crete," in *Hell in the Byzantine World: A History of Art and Religion in Venetian Crete and the Eastern Mediterranean*, vol. 1, *Essays*, ed. A. Lymberopoulou (Cambridge, 2020), 117–90, at 120; however, it does not represent the entire range of possibilities encountered on Crete.

88 For similar cases in which real people (donors or deceased people) are included in a representation of the Last Judgment, see V. Tsamakda, "Darstellungen realer Personen im Kontext christlicher Szenen," in *Privatporträt: Die Darstellung realer Personen in der spätantiken und byzantinischen Kunst*, ed. V. Tsamakda and N. Zimmermann (Vienna, 2020), 219–41, at 227–30.

89 In both chapels of the katholikon, several graves from various periods were found; see Moschove, "Νέα στοιχεία," 599, n. 3. None of the tombs can be connected to the deceased Venier.

90 Moschove, "Νέα στοιχεία," 604–5.

91 On the affinities between Vrachasi and Kapistri, mainly from an iconographic point of view, see Moschove, "Νέα στοιχεία," 605. On the church in Kapistri, see briefly *Arch. Δελτ.* 56 (2001–2004): 592–93. The frescoes of Kapistri are unpublished. The seated apostles in the Last Judgment scenes of the two churches (the one in Kapistri is also not included in Lymberopoulou and Duits, *Hell in the Byzantine World*) are comparable, as well as the relatively dark faces of the angels in Vrachasi and the ones flanking the seated Virgin on the northern wall in Kapistri.



Fig. 8. Church of St. George, Vrachasi, Tribunal of the Apostles. Photo by authors.

especially for the execution of large painting programs.⁹² The latter could also be the case in Vrachasi. Mavrianos was a master painter who trained apprentices. It is reasonable to assume that he led an artist's workshop with several assistants. In fact, from the contract of 1390 (Appendix, doc. 1), we are informed about one such apprentice, Michael Charchiopoulos.⁹³ Since it was agreed that he would learn the art of wall painting and assist Mavrianos for ten years, it is possible that this second painter was Charchiopoulos. However, this presupposes that Charchiopoulos was the only apprentice

of Mavrianos at that time and that he indeed remained his apprentice until the completion of the frescoes in Vrachasi. As in similar cases, only Mavrianos, as the leader of the workshop, signed the contract.⁹⁴ Studying the murals in Kato Symi, also executed by Mavrianos according to the contract of 1421 but including more narrative scenes, will help us gain insight into the organization, mode of operation, and development of his workshop over the course of time and better estimate the place of Mavrianos's painting in contemporary Byzantine art on Crete.

92 On this, see Tsamakda, *Kakodiki*, 110. Borboudakes, "Η τέχνη κατά τη Βενετοκρατία," 235, explains the differences in quality within one monument by the different artistic niveau of the participating main and secondary painters of a workshop.

93 See above, p. 253.

94 The same applies to the dedicatory inscriptions in which only the master painter is mentioned by name, although the participation of more than one artist in the execution of the decoration is sometimes obvious. For examples from the workshop of Ioannes Pagomenos, see Tsamakda, *Kakodiki*, 111.

Georgios Mavrianos and the Church of Panagia in Kato Symi

Several sources mention the area of Symi—situated at the borders between the prefectures of Heraklion and Lasithi—throughout the Venetian dominion.⁹⁵ Two documents of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries refer to Symi as a single settlement.⁹⁶ However, from the early fifteenth century on, the same area began to be cited separately as Ano (or Apano) and Kato Symi.⁹⁷ This distinction has been preserved until today.

Until recently, the only known church in the area was St. George in Ano Symi, initially listed by Gerola because of its frescoes painted by Manuel Phokas shortly after the Fall of Constantinople in 1453.⁹⁸

The Document on the Church of Panagia in Kato Symi

This document (Appendix, doc. 3) refers to another commission to Mavrianos, again in eastern Crete. The content of the contract can be summarized as follows: On 19 May 1419,⁹⁹ the Cretan painter Georgios Mavrianos made a quittance to the Venetian noble Nicola Corner for the wall paintings of the Church of

Panagia in Symi, a village (*casale*)¹⁰⁰ that belonged to the latter. The plural form used in 1419 to indicate the settlement of Symi (*Simes*) clearly hints at the aforementioned distinction in Apano and Kato Symi since at least 1410.¹⁰¹ The agreement specified that Mavrianos should paint all subjects from the life of Jesus Christ and Virgin Mary in small format (*in opera minuta*) so that all paintings fit in the available space. The painter should leave Chandax for Symi on 15 June 1419, and the payment agreed upon for his work was seventy hyperpera.

In contrast to the document of 1401, which implies that a contract between Georgios Mavrianos and Emanuele Venier already existed and thus omits the details of their previous agreement, this document includes for the first time details that shed light on the *modus operandi* of a wall-painting commission in a church, whose frescoes are partially preserved. Interestingly, the price agreed upon between Mavrianos and Corner in 1419 is evidently much lower in comparison to that agreed upon for the creation of the frescoes in the Church of St. George in Vrachasi in 1401, although the churches have almost the same dimensions. Since the payment of 120 hyperpera agreed upon by Mavrianos and Venier for the church in Vrachasi far exceeded the amount of sixty hyperpera agreed upon by Souranas and Synadenos and Georgios Piperes in 1399, this might be the reason for Venier's denial to pay off Mavrianos and the subsequent settlement of their dispute in court.

The information provided by the contract generally aligns with other similar contracts published by Cattapan (e.g., the time in which the painter's work should commence). Of particular interest here are the specific instructions about the small format of the compositions. Such a stipulation is unique in our sources, and it might be directly related to the available space in the church.¹⁰²

As with Venier, members of the Venetian family of Corner were among the first to colonize Crete after 1211.¹⁰³ Nicola Corner, son of the late Andrea, could

95 Spanakes, *Πόλεις και χωριά*, 2:747.

96 A. Lombardo, ed., *Documenti della colonia veneziana in Creta* (Torino, 1942), 117 (*Symie*), and Santschi, *Régestes*, 194 (*Simi*), respectively.

97 See, for example, A.S.V., *Notai di Candia*, b. 23 [Giorgio Della Gronda], fol. 33 [119]r: *Eodem [die] [XXI mensis Februarii 1409]. Manifestum facio ego, Nicolaus Cornario, filius domini Andree de Venetie, habitator Candide, cum meis heredibus, tibi, Iohanni Demolin, diaco, habitatori casalis Catosimi . . .* (On the same day [21 February 1409 (= 1410)]. I, Nicola Corner, son of Sir Andrea of Venice, resident of Chandax, with my successors, make public to you, Ioannes Demolinos, deacon, resident of the village of Kato Symi . . .), and A.S.V., *Notai di Candia*, b. 235 [Giovanni Risino], quad. 7, fol. 22r: [XXVII mensis Aprilis 1464] *Theotochius Andrioti, habitator casalis Apano Simi, quia cum meis heredibus, do, concedo et in perpetuum transacto in gonico tibi, Marco Bonfilio, habitatori casalis Cato Simi et heredibus, quiddam molendinum . . .* ([27 April 1464] I, Theotokes Andriotes, resident of the village of Apano Symi, with my successors, give, concede, and permanently sell to you, Marco Bonfilio, resident of the village of Kato Symi, and to your successors, one mill-house . . .).

98 Gerola, *Monumenti veneti*, 4:577, no. 10, and Gerola and Lassithiotakes, *Τοπογραφικός κατάλογος*, 101, no. 741. See also Tsougarakes and Aggelomate-Tsougarake, *Corpus*, 217, no. 192, where two graffiti, one from the year 1478 and the other from 1502, are reported at the north side of the narthex.

99 The document is published by Cattapan with the wrong date of 21 May 1420 (Cattapan, "Nuovi clenchi," 228–29, doc. 29).

100 On this term, see C. Gasparis, "Il villaggio a Creta veneziana: XIII–XV sec.," in *Les villages dans l'Empire Byzantin: IV^e–XV^e siècle*, ed. J. Lefort, C. Morrisson, and J.-P. Sordini (Paris, 2005), 237–46.

101 Cf. above, n. 97.

102 Cf. below, p. 267.

103 Tafel and Thomas, *Urkunden*, 477.



Fig. 9. Church of Panagia, Kato Symi, view from the east. Photo by authors.

apparently be identified with *Nicolaum Cornario*, son and execuitee of Maria Cornario, *relicta domini Andree Cornario* (widow of Sir Andrea Corner), whose testament was written on 10 October 1382.¹⁰⁴ The testament mentions several Latin ecclesiastic foundations in Chandax and its suburbs that Maria frequented: the monastery of St. Francis, the nunneries of St. George and St. Catherine,¹⁰⁵ and others. As in the case of Venier,¹⁰⁶ there is no evidence of Corner's religious identity, but we have no reason to assume that it was different from his mother's. That a Venetian noble employed a Cretan painter to decorate an Orthodox church does not necessarily mean that the noble was Orthodox. Rather, it was an act of service to the subordinate Orthodox peasants who worked on his property.

104 McKee, *Wills*, 2:909–10, doc. 721.

105 These ecclesiastic foundations are identified with nos. 118, 126–27 of the list of G. Gerola, "Topografia delle chiese della città di Candia," *Bessarione* 34 (1918): 3–65, at 29; cf. Gerola, *Monumenti veneti*, 2:112–17, 129.

106 See above, p. 255.

The Church of Panagia in Kato Symi

Because of its poor state of preservation, the church has not attracted the attention of scholars, although its frescoes are of high quality. As the church and its frescoes are unknown, they were never connected to the document published by Cattapan. Additionally, the document lists the settlement where the church is located as Simes, something that may have also hindered the identification of the church.

ARCHITECTURE

The church is a single-aisled building (Fig. 9). Evidently, it partially collapsed at some point in the past and was rebuilt. Still visible are traces of two transverse arches that divided the church into three bays and were at some point removed. The western bay was demolished. Today, the entrance to the church is on the western wall. Only the southern wall and parts of the eastern one are original. Consequently, paintings survive only on these parts (Fig. 10).



Fig. 10. Church of Panagia, Kato Symi, surviving frescoes on the eastern and southern wall. Photo by authors.

THE WALL PAINTINGS

Iconographic Program

Though a complete investigation of the pictorial program is impossible, many of the remaining subjects can still be identified. In the present state of preservation, the decoration comprises a Christological cycle, scenes from the Life of the Virgin, and full-figure saints. We can distinguish the following themes.

In the sanctuary, only fragments from the Virgin of the Annunciation and from a bearded deacon placed under an arch below her are still visible on the eastern wall to the right of the apse. The barrel vault of the sanctuary has scenes arranged in two registers; those of the upper register are unintelligible. The zone below shows two scenes from the cycle of Christ's appearances after the Passion: Christ Appearing to the Apostles (Peace be unto you) and Christ Appearing to the Two Marys (*Chairete*). The southern wall depicts three frontally standing bishops.

In the naos, wall paintings in poor condition can still be seen only on the southern wall of the middle bay. The barrel vault is divided into two registers. The upper register has the Entry into Jerusalem and the Betrayal. The register below contains three scenes from the Virgin cycle. From east to west, these are the Nativity of the Virgin, the Caressing, and the Presentation of the Virgin in the Temple. On the southern wall, the Deësis is depicted directly in front of the sanctuary with Christ located below the destroyed transverse arch. The depiction served as a proskynesis image.¹⁰⁷ Three military saints follow. All figures on the wall are placed under arches.

The iconographic program conforms to the basic principles of Byzantine church decoration. From the

107 On such prostration images on the lateral walls of Cretan churches, see A. Mailis, *Obscured by Walls: The Bēma Display of the Cretan Churches from Visibility to Concealment* (Mainz, 2020), esp. 53–106.

arrangement of the scenes, it is clear that the church was dedicated to the Virgin. The decoration seems to emphasize military saints. However, since so large a part of the iconographic program has been lost, all conclusions remain tentative.

The document of 1419 (Appendix, doc. 3) mentions only that Georgios Mavrianos had to paint all stories of Christ and of the Virgin (*omnes figuras istoriarum Jesu Christi et Beate Marie Virginis*). These subjects were indeed included in the program. Mavrianos had to make sure that these compositions were painted in the manner he thought best when considering the available space. This clause in the contract allowed the painter a great deal of freedom in creating the fresco decoration.

The phrase *in opera minuta* is of particular interest. It likely refers to the small format of these images. The small dimensions of the church may also account for this remark. In any case, it remains unique among the extant relevant documents. We can observe that the narrative scenes in the barrel vault are rendered on a much smaller scale than the saints on the walls. They are also smaller in scale compared to similar scenes in other churches.¹⁰⁸ The scenes of the Life of the Virgin are even more reduced in scale compared to the Christological cycle, to which it is as usual subordinated.

On the southern wall to the right of St. Theodore, there is a relief-like graffito of 1419 and a monogram below it made by a cross and the letters *C* and *n* (see below, Fig. 16). Perhaps it is no coincidence that these letters correspond to the initials of the noble Nicola Corner, who commissioned the wall paintings.¹⁰⁹ The monogram is identical to that in the Church of the Apostles in Lithines (1415).¹¹⁰ According to the notarial act of 1419, the painter was to leave Chandax for Symi on 15 June. Thus, we can safely assume that the wall paintings were finished within the same year. Nicola

Corner likely added his monogram and the date in this prominent position upon seeing the finished work.¹¹¹

Iconography

Only a few parts from the lower half of the Entry into Jerusalem are still visible, including the head of the ass on which Jesus rides, a naked child in the foreground, and a small branch of a tree between them. To the right, there are remnants of the city of Jerusalem and people standing before its gate. The scene follows contemporary trends in Palaeologan iconography.¹¹²

From the composition of the Betrayal of Judas, only the lower parts still survive (Fig. 11). The lower part of Judas's body is next to that of Christ, whom he probably embraced, following the standard iconography.¹¹³ In the lower-right corner, Peter (inscribed as Π) is cutting off Malchus's ear, while behind him stand some figures. Since the scene is badly damaged, no further iconographic observations can be made.

For the same reason, the scene of Christ Appearing to the Apostles (Peace be unto you) cannot be described in detail. In the center of a symmetrical composition, Christ stands frontally and blesses with outstretched hands. An edifice with a green cupola is visible behind him. Christ is flanked by two groups of apostles, of which only the garments in the lower parts and some feet are visible. They are standing in front of buildings. The composition represents Christ Appearing to the Apostles (Peace be unto you) in a building *with the doors*

111 Such a case of inspection and approval is attested by the aforementioned contract signed in 1331 between the painter Nikolaos Vassalos and Markos Mouatsos (Cattapan, "Nuovi elenchi," 227, no. 26). According to the contract, after the completion of the work, two people were to judge the result and, if it was satisfactory, the painter would receive his payment. Interestingly, the contract was later annulled. This document implies that dissatisfaction on the part of the commissioners was perhaps frequently the case. Compare also with what was said above (p. 254) about the quarrel between Georgios Mavrianos and Emanuele Venier.

112 On the iconography of this subject, see E. Lucchesi Palli, "Einzug in Jerusalem," *LChrI* 1:593–97, and Lucchesi Palli, "Einzug in Jerusalem," *RBK* 2:22–30; for Crete, see Kalokyres, *Αἱ βυζαντινὰι τοιχογραφίαι*, 68–70; Spatharakis, *Rethymnon*, 292–93; and Tsamakda, *Kakodiki*, 176–77.

113 On the iconography of the Betrayal, see J. Thüner, "Verrat des Judas," *LChrI* 4:440–43, and C. Papakyriakou, "Η Προδοσία του Ιούδα: Παρατηρήσεις στην μεταεικονομαχική εικονογραφία της παράστασης," *Byzantina* 23 (2003): 233–60; for Crete, see Kalokyres, *Αἱ βυζαντινὰι τοιχογραφίαι*, 85–86; Spatharakis, *Rethymnon*, 293–95; and Tsamakda, *Kakodiki*, 178–80.

108 The difference in scale between the saints on the walls and the narrative scenes on the barrel vaults is common, but in the case of the church in Kato Symi, it is more conspicuous.

109 It is unknown if the first letter in a monogram refers to the name or the surname. In the case of the graffiti beginning with *hic fuit*, the surname always follows; on this, see Tsougarakes and Aggelomate-Tsougarake, *Corpus*, 39.

110 Tsougarakes and Aggelomate-Tsougarake, *Corpus*, no. 220.43. For cases of visitors who scratched their name in more than one church, see *ibid.*, 50–53.



Fig. 11. Church of Panagia, Kato Symi, the Betrayal. Photo by authors.

locked, according to John 20:19 and 26, a subject that is relatively rare on Crete. The scene follows the standard iconography for this variant,¹¹⁴ as seen for instance in the Church of the Savior in Ano Karkasa (end of the fourteenth century).¹¹⁵

The scene of Christ Appearing to the Two Marys (Chairete) is greatly damaged. It depicts Christ, recognizable by his cruciform nimbus, standing in the center and flanked by two nimbed people, most likely Mary Magdalene and “the other Mary” according to Matthew 28:1. The woman on the left wears dark

purple garments;¹¹⁶ the one on the right has green ones. The incident unfolds in a landscape defined by two hills. The composition seems to follow the standard iconographic scheme according to which Christ is depicted blessing the two kneeling Marys with outstretched hands.¹¹⁷ The posture of the women can vary. In Kato Symi, Christ does not extend both hands.¹¹⁸ In this church, neither woman bends down to touch Christ’s feet, but they seem to raise their hands

114 On the iconography of this subject, see K. Wessel, “Erscheinungen des Auferstandenen,” *RBK* 2:383; J. Myslivec, “Apostel,” *LChrI* 1:168; W. Medding, “Erscheinung Christi vor den Aposteln,” *LChrI* 1:671–72; N. Gkioles, “Πορευθέντες . . .” (Εικονογραφικές παρατηρήσεις), *Δίπτυχα* 1 (1979): 104–42, esp. 130–40; A. W. Carr, “Appearances of Christ after the Passion,” *ODB* 1:142–43; and N. Zarras, *Ο εικονογραφικός κύκλος των εωθινών ευαγγελίων στην παλαιολόγεια μνημειακή ζωγραφική των Βαλκανίων* (Thessaloniki, 2011), 190–208.

115 Zarras, *Ο κύκλος των εωθινών ευαγγελίων*, 192, fig. 81.

116 The woman on Christ’s right wearing a purple *maphorion* is usually identified as the Virgin, an identification that was influenced by the writings of Gregorios Palamas (1294–1357), among others; see N. Zarras, “La tradition de la présence de la Vierge dans les scènes du ‘Lithos’ et du ‘Chairete’ et son influence sur l’iconographie tardobyzantine,” *Zograf* 28 (2000–2001): 113–20, esp. at 115, 118–20.

117 On the iconography of this subject, see Wessel, “Erscheinungen des Auferstandenen,” 379–83; W. Medding, “Erscheinung des Auferstandenen (2) vor den Frauen,” *LChrI* 1:666–67; Carr, “Appearances of Christ after the Passion,” 142–43; Zarras, “La tradition”; and Zarras, *Ο κύκλος των εωθινών ευαγγελίων*, 126–32.

118 On this relatively rare detail, see Zarras, *Ο κύκλος των εωθινών ευαγγελίων*, 128, with parallels.

toward him. A comparable composition, painted by Ioannes Pagomenos in 1328, is found in the Church of St. John at Trachiniakos.¹¹⁹ Christ's posture and the colors of the women's vestments can be best compared to the images at the Valsamonero monastery of St. Phanourios (beginning of the fifteenth century)¹²⁰ and at St. George in Emparos (1436/37), painted by Manuel Phokas.¹²¹

In its present state of preservation, the Virgin cycle comprises three episodes, depicted in chronological sequence.¹²² The cycle most probably continued on the opposite wall.

The Nativity of the Virgin is partially destroyed (Fig. 12). It shows Anne seated on a comparatively large rectangular bed leaning forward with crossed arms in a state of exhaustion. A midwife stands next to Anne looking at her and probably offering her support.¹²³ Two female servants carrying undefined objects, perhaps spices for the Virgin, approach from the right. In the lower-right corner, a woman sits in profile, turned to the left and holding what is likely a flabellum or a spindle; in front of her is the cradle, where the newborn Virgin lies wrapped in swaddling clothes. The scene takes place in front of an architectonical fantasy with walls and hanging draperies. The composition

follows the standard iconographic scheme¹²⁴ and can be compared to the one in the Panagia in Palaia Roumata (1359/60),¹²⁵ the Panagia in Kapetaniana (1401/2),¹²⁶ and the Panagia in Sklaverochori (mid-fifteenth century).¹²⁷ Although its state of preservation is very bad, the version in Panagia Keragrammeni in Kapistri (beginning of the fifteenth century) seems to correspond exactly to the one in Kato Symi.

Following the standard iconographic scheme,¹²⁸ the scene of the Caressing of the Virgin represents the infant Mary caressed by her parents, Anne on the right and Joachim on the left (Fig. 13). Joachim's head is touching Mary's, while Anne is about to kiss her. The child is seated on Anne's knees and extends her left hand. In the background, there is an architectural setting flanked by curtains, implying that the scene takes place inside a house. The composition shares the standard iconography, for example, with the scene in Studeniča (1314).¹²⁹ Among the Cretan comparative material, there are striking similarities to the Panagia Keragrammeni in Kapistri.

The Presentation of the Virgin in the Temple comprises two episodes: the Presentation and the Feeding by an Angel (Fig. 14). In the foreground, the High Priest Zacharias is depicted standing on the left and receiving Mary, who approaches him with extended arms. A maiden follows Mary and presents her to Zacharias. She is followed by another veiled maiden who holds a candle, as well as by her parents. Four more young girls with unveiled heads stand in the background. St. Anne turns her head in the direction of Joachim instead of looking at the Virgin. A seventh young girl

119 T. Ioannidou, "Το παρεκκλήσι του Αγίου Ιωάννου του Θεολόγου 'στον Τραχινιάκω(ν)' Καντάνου, της επαρχίας Σελίνου, νομού Χανίων: Συμβολή στο έργο του κρητικού ζωγράφου Ιωάννη Παγωμένου (α' μισό του 14ου αιώνα)" (master's thesis, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, 2016), <http://ikee.lib.auth.gr/record/295589?ln=en>, pls. 53–54. On the wall paintings and their attribution to Ioannes Pagomenos, see also Tsamakda, *Kakodiki*, 116–17.

120 M. Borboudake, "Ο αρχικός ναός της Παναγίας της Οδηγήτριας," in *Οι τοιχογραφίες της Μονής του Βαλσαμονέρου*, 53–180, at 81–82, pls. 6, 24b.

121 I. Spatharakis, *Dated Byzantine Wall Paintings of Crete* (Leiden, 2001), 185.

122 On the iconography of the Virgin cycle, see G. M. Lechner, "Maria," *RBK* 6:95–109; M. Nitz, "Marienleben," *LChrI* 3:212–33; J. Lafontaine-Dosogne, *Iconographie de l'enfance de la Vierge dans l'Empire Byzantin et en Occident*, 2 vols., 2nd ed. (Brussels, 1992); and J. Lafontaine-Dosogne, "Iconography of the Cycle of the Life of the Virgin," in *The Kariye Djami*, vol. 4, *Studies in the Art of the Kariye Djami and Its Intellectual Background*, ed. P. A. Underwood (London, 1975), 161–94; for Crete, see Kalokyres, *Αι βυζαντιναι τοιχογραφιαι*, 104–16, and Spatharakis, *Rethymnon*, 307–11.

123 Compare with the mosaic in the inner narthex of the Monastery of Christ at Chora: P. A. Underwood, *The Kariye Djami* (New York, 1966), 2: pl. 98.

124 On the iconography of the Nativity of the Virgin, see Lafontaine-Dosogne, *L'enfance de la Vierge*, 1:89–120, and Lafontaine-Dosogne, "Life of the Virgin," 174–76; for Crete, see Kalokyres, *Αι βυζαντιναι τοιχογραφιαι*, 106–7. A good parallel outside Crete can be found, for example, in the Church of the Virgin Peribleptos (currently St. Clement) in Ohrid (1294/95); see Lafontaine-Dosogne, *L'enfance de la Vierge*, 1: fig. 20.

125 Spatharakis, *Dated Wall Paintings*, 109, 110.

126 Spatharakis, *Dated Wall Paintings*, 158.

127 M. Borboudakes, "Παρατηρήσεις στη ζωγραφική του Σκλαβεροχωρίου," in *Ευφρόσυνον: Αφιέρωμα στον Μανόλη Χατζηδάκη* (Athens, 1991), 1:375–99, at 378, pl. 190a.

128 On the iconography of the Caressing, see Lafontaine-Dosogne, *L'enfance de la Vierge*, 1:124–27, and Lafontaine-Dosogne, "Life of the Virgin," 177–78; for Crete, see Kalokyres, *Αι βυζαντιναι τοιχογραφιαι*, 107–8.

129 Lafontaine-Dosogne, *L'enfance de la Vierge*, 1: fig. 64.

Fig. 12.
Church of Panagia, Kato
Symi, the Nativity of the
Virgin. Photo by authors.



Fig. 13.
Church of Panagia, Kato
Symi, the Caressing of the
Virgin. Photo by authors.





Fig. 14.
Church of Panagia,
Kato Symi, the
Presentation of the
Virgin in the Temple.
Photo by authors.

was perhaps depicted on the far right side, but this part of the composition has been destroyed. The second episode is placed in smaller scale in the upper-left corner. It shows Mary seated on the steps of the sanctuary below a ciborium. A flying angel approaches and brings her food, as described in apocryphal texts. The inscription reads: TA AGIA TON AGION (the Holy of Holies). The scenes take place before an architectural setting that signifies the Temple. The representation adheres to established iconographic patterns found in many Macedonian monuments of the fourteenth century, according to which Mary is presented to Zacharias not by her parents but by one of the virgins.¹³⁰ On

Crete, very close parallels are found at the Panagia in Kapetaniana (1401/2),¹³¹ the Panagia Kardiotissa in Voroi (beginning of the fifteenth century),¹³² the Panagia in Sklaverochori (mid-fifteenth century),¹³³ and again at the Panagia in Malles (1431/32).¹³⁴ All

"Life of the Virgin," 179–83; for Crete, see Kalokyres, *Αἱ βυζαντινὰι τοιχογραφίαι*, 110–11.

131 Spatharakis, *Dated Wall Paintings*, 158.

132 M. Borboudakes, "Παναγία Καρδιώτισσα Βόρων," in *Πεπραγμένα Θ' διεθνούς Κρητολογικού συνεδρίου* (Heraklion, 2004), 2.2:107–18, fig. 2.

133 Borboudakes, "Παρατηρήσεις," 381, 386, pl. 190b, and Maderakes, "Βυζαντινή ζωγραφική," 286.

134 T. M. Provatakes, "Παναγία η Μεσοχωρίτισσα: Ένας παλαιολόγειος ναός στις Μάλλες Λασιθίου Κρήτης," in *Τιμητικό αφιέρωμα στον ομότιμο καθηγητή Κωνσταντίνο Δ. Καλοκύρη* (Thessaloniki, 1985), 469–523, at 500–1, figs. 26–28, and M. Aspra-Vardavake, "Οι τοιχογραφίες της Παναγίας Μεσοχωρίτισσας στις Μάλλες Λασιθίου Κρήτης," *Δίπτυχα*

130 An example can be found in the Church of the King in Studeniča (1313/14). On the iconography of the Presentation of the Virgin in the Temple and examples of this type, see Lafontaine-Dosogne, *L'enfance de la Vierge*, 1:136–67, and Lafontaine-Dosogne,



Fig. 15. Church of Panagia, Kato Symi, St. Spyridon. Photo by authors.

these scenes repeat the same iconography, which obviously goes back to a common archetype.

The depiction of the Deësis follows the standard scheme, showing Christ standing in the center holding a book and blessing, flanked by the Virgin on the left and St. John the Forerunner on the right. Both Mary and John raise their hands in supplication.¹³⁵ This type is very common on Crete and finds parallels among fifteenth-century church decorations,

Εταιρείας Βυζαντινών και Μεταβυζαντινών Μελετών 5 (1991): 172–250, at 222–23, pl. 24.

135 On the iconography of the Deësis, see T. von Bogay, “Deesis,” *RBK* 1:1178–1186, and M. Kazamia-Tsernou, *Ιστορώντας τη “Δέηση” στις βυζαντινές εκκλησίες της Ελλάδος* (Thessaloniki, 2003); for Crete, see Kalokyres, *Αι βυζαντιναι τοιχογραφίαι*, 99–101.

such as at St. Isidore in Kakodiki (1421).¹³⁶ However, the placement of the figures of the Deësis under arches is rare. A parallel exists at the Panagia in Kastamonitsa (mid-fourteenth century).¹³⁷

Three frontally standing bishops are depicted in the sanctuary, but their poor state of preservation precludes a secure identification. Only the first one could be identified, as St. Spyridon, on the basis of his characteristic headgear (Fig. 15).¹³⁸ Unlike the bishops in the sanctuary, the figures in the naos are all placed under arches. Three saints clad in military attire occupy the remaining wall surface to the right of the Deësis (Fig. 10). The first one is almost completely lost. The beardless saint is holding a sword and a shield and, based on his curly hair, could be identified as St. George.¹³⁹ The second saint is probably St. Demetrios. He is also beardless, has short and straight hair, and holds a lance, a small shield, and a bow.¹⁴⁰ The saint to the right, holding a lance and a sword, has curly hair and a short, dark, and round beard. He is probably St. Theodore Teron (Fig. 16).¹⁴¹ A close parallel regarding the stance, military costume, and weapons of the saint is found in the nearly contemporaneous St. Nicholas in Skidia.¹⁴² All these depictions of military saints are repeated in Cretan icons from the fifteenth century onward.¹⁴³

The iconography of the church displays pronounced affinities with a group of wall paintings of the first half of the fifteenth century, including works in churches dedicated to the Virgin in Kapetaniana, Sklaverochori, Voroi, and Malles. These churches use common iconographic sources that in turn find correspondences in Macedonia and Mistras. However, these sources and parallels all date to the fourteenth century

136 Maderakes, “Βυζαντινή ζωγραφική,” 292, pl. 110a.

137 Mailis, *Obscured by Walls*, 79, fig. 122.

138 On the iconography of St. Spyridon, see C. Weigert, “Spyridon (Spiridon) von Trimithon,” *LChri* 8:387–89.

139 On the iconography of St. George, see E. Lucchesi Palli, “Georg,” *LChri* 6:365–73, and C. Walter, *The Warrior Saints in Byzantine Art and Tradition* (Aldershot, 2003), 123–34.

140 On the iconography of St. Demetrios, see J. Myslivec, “Demetrius von Saloniki,” *LChri* 6:41–45, and Walter, *The Warrior Saints*, 76–93.

141 On the iconography of St. Theodore Teron, see C. Weigert, “Theodor Tiro von Euchaita (von Amasea),” *LChri* 8:447–51, and Walter, *The Warrior Saints*, 55–66.

142 Maderakes, “Βυζαντινή ζωγραφική,” 295, fig. 123b.

143 Maderakes, “Βυζαντινή ζωγραφική,” 295, with examples.



Fig. 16. Church of Panagia, Kato Symi, St. Theodore Stratelates. Photo by authors.

at the latest.¹⁴⁴ Scholars believe that they reflect Constantinopolitan art.¹⁴⁵

Style

Like the wall paintings in Vrachasi, those in Kato Symi are not homogeneous in style. The frescoes of the sanctuary differ from those in the naos. The faces of the deacon on the eastern wall and of St. Spyridon on the southern wall are much darker than those of the naos. However, due to their poor state of preservation, it is difficult to ascertain whether or not these paintings were created by a different artist. At the same time, the frescoes of this painter also differ from the ones in Vrachasi. In Kato Symi, Georgios Mavrianos probably created the surviving frescoes of the naos, which are of outstanding quality. They exhibit close affinities to the ones in Vrachasi but also differences that can be explained by

the intervening twenty years separating the production of these two mural programs.

The paintings of the naos exhibit all the characteristics of the classicizing trends of the first half of the fifteenth century on Crete.¹⁴⁶ These tendencies were already perceptible in Vrachasi, but the evolution of Mavrianos over the course of twenty years is remarkable. What is at first glance impressive in Kato Symi is the color scale, dominated by very bright blue and green colors, as well as ochre and earth tones (Fig. 11). The painter is well acquainted with the Palaeologan volume style. As seen especially in the Betrayal scene (Figs. 11, 17), the space is rendered with depth, and the various groups are clearly placed at different levels between the foreground and the background. The buildings are likewise rendered three-dimensionally, as seen in the Virgin scenes (Figs. 12–14). Like the elegant movements of the

144 See also Maderakes, “Βυζαντινή ζωγραφική,” 280.

145 M. Chatzidakis, “Τοιχογραφίες στην Κρήτη,” *Κρ.Χρον.* 6 (1952): 59–91, at 69, and Maderakes, “Βυζαντινή ζωγραφική,” 277.

146 On these tendencies, see Maderakes, “Βυζαντινή ζωγραφική,” who examines a group of seventeen Cretan monuments dating between ca. 1400 and 1430.

Fig. 17.
Church of
Panagia, Kato
Symi, detail of
the Betrayal.
Photo by authors.



Fig. 18.
Church of
Panagia, Kato
Symi, detail of
the Presentation
of the Virgin
in the Temple.
Photo by authors.



figures, the faces also express calmness, except for the face of Malchus (Fig. 17). The draperies are rendered plastically with the aid of tone gradations and white highlights, which sometimes take geometrical forms. The folds fall somewhat hard and jagged; the reflection of the light awards them a metallic impression (Figs. 11, 17). The faces of the figures in the Presentation image are best preserved (Fig. 18): they are modeled with light to dark olive-green shadows and highlighted by thin white strokes, which strongly evoke the technique of icon painting.

Mavrianos's paintings belong in the group of wall paintings from the first half of the fifteenth century on Crete that are characterized by a classicizing style. The earliest dated monuments of this group are the Panagia in Kapetaniana and the Panagia Vryomeni in Mesleroi, both dated by inscription to 1401/2.¹⁴⁷ Most of these churches display the same academic style and, at the same time, a conspicuous influence from icon painting, a technique applied above all to the depiction of saints.¹⁴⁸ Further, there are similarities in the rendering of space, the rendering of the buildings, and the treatment of the garments. As we have seen, the iconography also invites comparison with the same group of churches. However, we cannot identify with certainty Georgios Mavrianos as having worked in one of these churches or any other church known to us. Nevertheless, his paintings significantly contribute to our knowledge of Byzantine art on Crete during that period, since they can serve as another reference point for dating other monuments.

From the study of the two church decorations in Vrachasi and Kato Symi, we can conclude that Mavrianos developed his style over a period of time and that he collaborated with other painters. As specified in the contract of apprenticeship of 1390, Mavrianos's apprentice would have assisted him in his work. The hands of such apprentices are thus certainly among the extant paintings but cannot be securely identified. The second painter in Kato Symi is not mentioned in the document,¹⁴⁹ but he probably belonged to someone in Mavrianos's workshop.¹⁵⁰

Konstantinos Gaitanas and the Church of the Holy Apostles in Kato Karkasa

The sources on the fifteenth-century history of monasticism in the area of Karkasa (alias Karkasies) are limited and somehow ambiguous. Two churches, the Savior in Ano Karkasa and the Holy Apostles in Kato Karkasa, have been there since the beginning of the fifteenth century, if not earlier.¹⁵¹ Both churches have preserved Late Byzantine wall paintings. In 1901–1902, Gerola took informal notes on these wall paintings and recorded some of the depicted subjects.¹⁵² The frescoes remain, however, virtually unknown. Especially for the Holy Apostles's wall paintings, modern scholars have emphasized their excellent quality, which displays Constantinopolitan influence.¹⁵³

The first mention of a monastic establishment in the area is found in manuscripts of the letters that the Cretan hieromonk Neilos Damilas sent to Maximus Chrysoberges. The earliest fifteenth-century manuscripts that preserve the letters do not mention Damilas as a resident of Karkasa (e.s., Patmos, Monastery of Saint John the Theologian, gr. 428 and gr. 669, and Alexandria, Patriarchal Library, gr. 341). The first such mention is found in Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, gr. 1295 (fifteenth to sixteenth centuries), where on f. 60v we read: Ποίημα κυροῦ Νείλου ἱερομονάχου καὶ πνευματικοῦ πατρός, τοῦ ἐπιλεγομένου Νταμιλά τοῦ Κρητικοῦ, τοῦ ἐν τῇ ἱερᾷ μονῇ τῶν Καρκασιῶν (Work of the hieromonk and spiritual father, Sir Neilos, the so-called Damilas, from Crete, resident of the sacred monastery of Karkasa). This geographical information on Damilas's residence is repeated in Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, gr. 1286 (sixteenth century); Bremen, Staats- und Universitätsbibliothek,

painter to assist him for a specific commission; for example, see Cattapan, "Nuovi elenchi," 211, no. 4, and Vassilaki, "Looking at Icons and Contracts," 107. Such a division of labor presupposes that the workshop received a steady stream of commissions.

151 See mainly D. Tsougarakis and E. Angelomatis-Tsougarakis, "Monasteries of South-Eastern Crete during the Venetian Period," in *Εὐκοσμία: Studi miscellanei per il 750 di Vincenzo Poggi S. J.*, ed. V. Ruggieri and L. Pieralli (Catanzaro, 2003), 541–72, and Nikolidakes, *Νεῖλος Δαμιλάς*, 113–20.

152 Gerola and Lassithiotakes, *Τοπογραφικὸς κατάλογος*, 101–2, nos. 747–48.

153 Borboudakes, "Ἡ τέχνη κατὰ τὴν Βενετοκρατίαν," 242, 246, and Maderakes, "Βυζαντινὴ ζωγραφικὴ," 279, n. 35.

147 Maderakes, "Βυζαντινὴ ζωγραφικὴ," 273.

148 See Bissinger, *Kreta*, 217.

149 Among the published contracts, there is only one case in which a person hires two painters to paint a church; see above, pp. 249–50.

150 There is also the possibility, demonstrated by analogous contracts for the painting of icons, that a painter could hire another

C 006; and Moscow, State Historical Museum, Sinod. gr. 207 (Vlad. 250) (seventeenth century). Along with the geographical information, this latter manuscript also reports the year in which the letters were written: ἔτει ἀπὸ Χριστοῦ, αὐ' (1400).¹⁵⁴ According to this evidence, the place in which Damilas lived during the late fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries is generally mentioned as the monastery of Karkasa, without any reference to a church or a monastery dedicated to the Holy Apostles or to the Savior.

In the Church of the Savior, the earliest graffito preserved on its walls dates from the year 1436 and post-dates the construction of the church and the execution of its wall paintings: *Adi p[ri]ma mazo 1436 hic fuit Dono . . . mas. Ilos . . . sancta p[er] t[ut]to morttallia corpora dio ete . . . possa dellibe . . . de detto mos. Amen* (On 1 May 1436 was here Dono . . . mas. To those . . . Holy and entirely mortal body, God . . .).¹⁵⁵ Much more information exists about the Church of the Holy Apostles in Kato Karkasa, which is located one kilometer away from that of the Savior. Regarding the date of its wall paintings, important evidence comes from two graffiti of the year ,ζ'λα' (1422/23), along with the partially preserved dedicatory inscription, first published by Demetrios Tsougarakes and Elene Aggelomate-Tsougarake.¹⁵⁶ The authors assume that these graffiti, incised twice beneath the dedicatory inscription, might repeat the partially preserved date at the end of the inscription: [ζ]λ[α].

At the end of the fifteenth century, the Cretan hieromonk and scholar Neilos Bertos mentions a monastery of the Holy Apostles that was inhabited by nuns: ποῦ αἱ ὁσαὶ ἐκεῖναι γυναῖκες καὶ καλογρές, ποῦ ἡ εὐλογημένη ψυχὴ ἐκεῖνῃ κυρὰ ἡ Ὑπομονή, ἡ καθηγουμένη τῆς μονῆς τῶν ἁγίων Ἀποστόλων, καὶ αἱ ἕτεραι πρῶται μοναχαί . . . (where those holy women and nuns are, where that blessed soul is, the lady Ὑπομονή, the Mother superior of the monastery of the Holy

Apostles, and the other first nuns . . .).¹⁵⁷ The identification of the Holy Apostles monastery in Kato Karkasa as the one mentioned by Bertos has been proposed by Nikolidakēs and has been followed by other scholars.¹⁵⁸ This, however, seems to contradict the information given by the sixteenth-century testament of Anthimos Donos, hegoumenos of the Holy Apostles monastery. According to this document, written in 1524, Anthimos was about to leave the monastery for his pilgrimage to Jerusalem. For this reason, he appointed the monk Paisios as his proxy to govern the monastery during his absence: Ἐπιτα ἀφήγην κουμεισάρηων ἐν τι μονῇ τῶν Ἀγίων Ἀποστόλων τῶν γκαλογέρων τῶν κυρ Παήσιων, καθὼς ἡμουν ἐγῶ, ἥνα ἔχη ἐξουσία νὰ βάλῃ μοναχους καὶ νὰ ευγάλῃ ὁστῆς δεν του ἔλε ἀρέσι . . . (Moreover, I leave Sir Paisios as a commissary at the monastery of the Holy Apostles of the monks, as was I before him, so as to have the authority to invite monks and to expel anyone he does not like . . .).¹⁵⁹ Thanks to the same document, we also learn that a great part of Damilas's private library was once kept at the Holy Apostles monastery.¹⁶⁰ On the other hand, more sixteenth-century evidence attests that in the same period the monastery of the Savior was deserted, and Anthimos, after his return from the pilgrimage, was to provide for its revitalization, should admit or expel nuns, and do whatever was good for the monastery.¹⁶¹

This information does not help to clarify the situation in the area of Karkasa during the fifteenth century. It seems, however, that monks and nuns coexisted at some point in the same area in scattered monastic cells, but they were geographically divided based on

154 The following text was based on this manuscript: K. Arsenij (Ivascenko), *Nila Damily ieromonakha Kritskago otvët' grekolatin-janinu monakhu Maksimu na ego pis'mo v zashitu latinskikh novostej v vëre: Grečeskij tekst I russkij perovod* (Novgorod, 1895). For the manuscript tradition and the stemmatic relation of the manuscripts, see Nikolidakēs, *Νείλος Δαμιλάς*, 83–91.

155 Tsougarakes and Aggelomate-Tsougarake, *Corpus*, 217, no. 190. The wall paintings have been dated to the end of the fourteenth century; see Andrianakēs and Giapitsoglou, *Χριστιανικά μνημεῖα*, 235.

156 Tsougarakes and Aggelomate-Tsougarake, *Corpus*, 216, no. 188. For the dedicatory inscription, see below, p. 281.

157 H. Aposkiti-Stammler, "Nathanael-Neilos Bertos: Vindobonensis Hist. gr. 91, Nr. 59" (PhD diss., University of Munich, 1974), 26, n. 2.

158 Nikolidakēs, *Νείλος Δαμιλάς*, 115; Tsougarakes and Angelomatis-Tsougarakis, "Monasteries," 545; and Andrianakēs and Giapitsoglou, *Χριστιανικά μνημεῖα*, 235. We should note that another church dedicated to the holy apostles is located in Andromyloi, near Lithines. Nevertheless, there is no evidence that there was a monastic establishment nearby. This church already existed at the beginning of the fifteenth century, as its frescoes are dated by inscription to 1415 (Gerola, *Monumenti veneti*, 4:586, no. 10). On this church, see also Spatharakis, *Dated Wall Paintings*, 167–69.

159 G. K. Mavromates, ed., *Ιωάννης Ολόκαλος, νοτάριος Ιεράπετρας: Κατάστιχο (1496–1543)* (Venice, 1994), 68–70, no. 31 [238].

160 On this subject, see Despotakis and Rigo, "Neilos Damilas" (forthcoming).

161 Cf. Tsougarakes and Angelomatis-Tsougarakis, "Monasteries," 546–47.

the location of the two churches, which, after Damilas passed away,¹⁶² began to be referred to as two different monasteries. As Nikolaos Tomadakes suggested, the term μονή should be considered as referring to a group of separate monastic cells.¹⁶³ It is worth noting that on the eve of the fifteenth century, the matter of coexistence between monks and nuns on Crete provoked the reaction of both the patriarchate of Constantinople¹⁶⁴ and the local Venetian authorities.¹⁶⁵ Maybe for this reason, on 9 May 1399, Damilas started to build the nunnery of Theotokos Pantanassa in Vaionaia, almost 6 kilometers away from the area of Karkasa.¹⁶⁶

*The Document on the Church of the
Holy Apostles in Kato Karkasa*

The new evidence presented here sheds light on the fifteenth-century history of the Church of the Holy Apostles in Kato Karkasa. It also links a commission and one more painter to existing Byzantine wall paintings on Crete under Venetian rule.

According to the newly discovered document (Appendix, doc. 5),¹⁶⁷ on 13 October 1422, the painter Konstantinos (*Costas*) Gaitanas was hired by the priest and hieromonk Neophytos Paschales, a resident of the Holy Apostles monastery in Kato Karkasa, to create wall paintings throughout the entire church of the

monastery, including the following subjects: all stories of the New Testament, which in Greek are called *Despotikes Eortes* (Feasts of the Lord); all stories from the life of the Mother of God; all those of the apostles; and the Last Judgment, which in Greek is called *Deftera Parusia*. The contract also specifies that this last subject should be placed in a certain part of the church called the *schutari* and that Gaitanas was free to choose the subjects for the remaining space of the church. Subsequently, Gaitanas states that he would begin his work at the Holy Apostles on 15 April 1423, with a view to finishing it during the summer of the same year. The agreed upon price was 185 Cretan hyperpera, plus the painter's sustenance.

In Cattapan's list of painters active on Crete, Konstantinos Gaitanas might correspond to no. 55: *Cumano Gatana Costa di Nichita*, resident of the suburb of Chandax, whose traces are found in the Veneto-Cretan archival documents in the years 1423–1443.¹⁶⁸ However, because of the methodology followed for the creation of this checklist, we are unable to ascertain if Cattapan had discovered within these years several documents related to Konstantinos Gaitanas or just two: namely, one concerning his activity in 1423 and another one mentioning him as dead in 1443. In any case, based on the current state of information, we should consider the year 1443 as the terminus ante quem for his death.

According to Cattapan's list, Gaitanas's family seems to be among the largest families of painters in fifteenth-century Chandax, along with those of the Clontzas (*Cloza*) and Phokas (*Fuca, Fucha*) families. He lists five artists in total, including the painter of the Church of the Holy Apostles: "Gaitana (Gatana) Giovanni (1424–1460 c. m.)" (no. 52); "Gaitana Nicola di Giovanni (1454–1463 m.)" (no. 53); "Gaitana Cocoli di Giovanni (1451–1482)" (no. 54); "Cumano Gatana Costa di Nichita (1423–1443 m.)" (no. 55); and "Gaitana (Gatana) Nicola di Costa (1444–1479)" (no. 56), all residents of the suburb of Chandax. Unlike other families such as Clontzas and Phokas, whose surname is included in archival documents of the sixteenth century,¹⁶⁹ the traces of the Gaitanas family seem to

162 See below, p. 279.

163 N. V. Tomadakes, "Εκκλησιαστικά τοπωνύμια και ονόματα," *Κρητολογία* 3 (1978): 2–48, at 25, and Nikolidakis, *Νείλος Δαμιλάς*, 120, n. 21.

164 N. V. Tomadakes, "Μελετήματα περί Ἰωσήφ Βρυεννίου: Α'. Τὸ ζήτημα τῶν συνεισάκτων ἐν Κρήτῃ καὶ Κύπρῳ (περί τὸ 1400); Β'. Χρονολογικὰ προβλήματα τῆς ζωῆς καὶ τοῦ ἔργου," *Επ.Επ.Βυζ.Σπ.* 29 (1959): 1–33, at 9–12.

165 Evidence of this is found in a decree issued by the duke of Candia, Marco Falier, according to which the coexistence of monks and nuns was strictly prohibited in both old and new monastic establishments. The penalty for the violation of this order was one year in prison, deportation from Crete, and fifty hyperpera: A.S.V., *Procuratori di San Marco, Chiesa, de supra*, b. 142, f. 71–v: *Die 8 augusti 1402*...

166 On this note reported in the codex Oxford, Bodleian Library, Barocci 69, see Despotakis and Rigo, "Neilos Damilas" (forthcoming). Indeed, in his typikon sent to the nuns of Vaionaia, Damilas justified himself for coexisting with them in the same area because there was no other place for him to stay while constructing the new monastery. See also S. Petridès, "Le typikon de Nil Damilas pour le monastère de femmes de Bæonia en Crète (1400)," *IRAIK* 15 (1911): 92–111, at 103,8–14; cf. Nikolidakis, *Νείλος Δαμιλάς*, 120.

167 A.S.V., *Notai di Candia*, b. 23 [Giovanni Longo], fol. 104 [249]v.

168 Cattapan, "Nuovi elenchi," 205.

169 For the related entries of the sixteenth century, see M. Konstantoudake, "Οἱ ζωγράφοι τοῦ Χάνδακος κατὰ τὸ πρῶτον ἡμισυ τοῦ 16ου αἰῶνος, οἱ μαρτυρούμενοι ἐκ τῶν νοταριακῶν ἀρχείων," *Θησαυρίσματα* 10 (1973): 291–380, at 311, 317, 321, 350, 358; M. Konstantoudake, "Νέα

disappear. However, several people with a similar surname (Γαϊτάνης) appear in the sixteenth century in the area of Hierapetra.¹⁷⁰

The difference between “Gaitana” and “Gatana” seems to be inconsequential; both variants must refer to the same family, since Cattapan noticed that nos. 52 and 56 were spotted in the documents spelled both ways. The same surname also appears spelled both ways in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, but outside Crete. *Prosopographisches Lexikon der Palaiologenzeit* records two persons, Theodoros Gaitanas (Γαϊτανᾶς) and Konstantinos Gaitanas (Γαϊτανᾶς) from Cephalonia in 1264,¹⁷¹ and a Georgios Gatana (Γατανᾶς) from Smyrni in 1281.¹⁷² Other people with the same or similar surname (e.g., Gaitanes or Gatanes) are also found in Hierissos,¹⁷³ while a certain Leonardos Gaitanos from Famagusta appears on Crete in 1301.¹⁷⁴ Based on the archival evidence, we have no reason to doubt the Cretan origin of the fifteenth-century group of painters belonging to the Gaitanas family. All notarial deeds consulted by Cattapan state that all members were established in the suburb of Chandax, without mentioning any other place of origin.¹⁷⁵ Moreover, another

list compiled by Cattapan with regard to the contracts of apprenticeships shows that Kokoles and especially Nikolaos Gaitanas were among those who taught the art of painting in fifteenth-century Chandax.¹⁷⁶ Michael Kornaros, Ioannes Asprogitis, Manuel Diminites, and Michael Scandalares are named as their disciples.¹⁷⁷ This fact, along with Neophytos Paschales’s commission to Konstantinos Gaitanas at the Church of the Holy Apostles, indicates that Gaitanas’s name was held in high esteem.

According to the contract of employment of October 1422 between Neophytos Paschales and Konstantinos Gaitanas, the latter was to begin his work in the Church of the Holy Apostles on 15 April 1423, with a view to finishing it during the summer of the same year. Like the contract between the executors of Anna Correr’s will and Georgios Mavrianos in which it was stipulated that the painter was to start work in April 1422 and finish it in September of the same year, if not earlier, this recently discovered document also specifies that the decoration of the entire church was to be completed in about four months. Moreover, the year in which Gaitanas was hired coincides exactly with the year ,ζᾳλα’ (1423) incised twice under the dedicatory inscription.

The agreed-upon price was 185 Cretan hyperpera, plus the painter’s sustenance. Such an amount far exceeds the payments to other contemporary commissions, namely those to Georgios Mavrianos, who received seventy and one hundred hyperpera in 1419

ἔγγραφα γιὰ ζωγράφους τοῦ Χάνδακα (15' αἰ.) ἀπὸ τὰ ἀρχεῖα τοῦ Δούκα καὶ τῶν νοταρίων τῆς Κρήτης,” in *Θησαυρίσματα* 14 (1973): 157–98, at 164–65, 168–70, 173, 185–86; and A. D. Paliouras, “Ἡ ζωγραφικὴ εἰς τὸν Χάνδακα ἀπὸ 1550–1600,” in *Θησαυρίσματα* 10 (1973): 157–98, at 119–20, 123.

170 A. E. Chatzake, “Ἡ Καστελλανία τῆς Ιεράπετρας κατὰ το 16ο αἰώνα: Κοινωνικὲς καὶ οικονομικὲς ὀψεις” (PhD diss., University of Corfu, 2013), 218, 362, 431, 438, 445. A certain “Gaitani Pietro detto Maruli” was a notary in sixteenth-century Chandax (A.S.V., *Notai di Candia*, b. 128).

171 PLP 3457–58.

172 PLP 3578.

173 PLP 3459–60, 3579.

174 R. Morozzo della Rocca, ed., *Benvenuto de Brixano: Notaio in Candia, 1301–1302* (Venice, 1950), 179, doc. 499.

175 This fact is also confirmed by our own research (e.g., A.S.V., *Notai di Candia*, b. 246 [Giovanni Sevasto], prot. 1, fol. 12v: *Eodem die [XXX mensis Iunii 1441]. Manifestum facio ego Iani Gaitana, pinctor, habitator burgi Candide . . .* [On the same day (30 June 1441). I, Ioannes Gaitanas, painter, resident of the suburbs of Chandax . . .]; and A.S.V., *Notai di Candia*, b. 187 bis [Leonardo Pantaleo], prot. 1, fol. 6v: *Eodem die [XX mensis Decembris 1467]. Manifestum facimus nos Nicola Gaitana, pinctor, principalis, et papas Iani Musuraki, eius plecius, ambo habitatores burgi Candide . . .* [On the same day (20 December 1467). We, Nikolaos Gaitanas, painter, principal, and the priest Ioannes Muzurakes, his guarantor, both residents of the suburbs of Chandax . . .]).

176 Cattapan, “Nuovi elenchi,” 217.

177 According to Cattapan’s list of teachers and apprentices, unfortunately without archival references, Kornaros, Asprogitis, and Scandalares became disciples of Nikolaos Gaitanas in the years 1461, 1464, and 1472, respectively, while Diminites was a disciple of Kokoles in the year 1465. In our research, however, we noticed that in the contract of 1465, the former apprentice of Kokoles Gaitanas was not Manuel Diminites but Michael Scandalares: *Eodem die [VII mensis Maii 1465]. Manifestum facio ego Michali Scadari, pinctor, habitator burgi Candide, tibi, magistro Cocoli Gaitana, pinctori, habitatori dicti burgi, et tuis heredibus, quia afirmo me tecum in tuum laborem tunc artis tue suprascripte, a modo usque ad annum .i. proxime venturum . . .* (On the same day [7 May 1465]. I, Michael Scandalares, painter, resident of the suburbs of Chandax, make public to you, the master Kokoles Gaitanas, painter, resident in the aforementioned suburbs, and to your successors, that I entrust myself to be at your disposal with regard to your aforementioned art, from now on and for the coming year . . .) (A.S.V., *Notai di Candia*, b. 279 [Francesco Vlachos], prot. 1, fol. 78 [160]r). It is possible that Cattapan confused the information provided by the documents and therefore transmitted them erroneously into his list.

and 1422, respectively (see above, p. 267). Gaitanas's payment is the highest in our sources so far, and it is a manifestation of his prominence on Crete during the first half of the fifteenth century. That the church is much bigger than the two painted by Mavrianos may have also played a role.

In comparison to a few other contracts published by Cattapan that as a rule mention creating frescoes throughout the entire church without specifying the subjects,¹⁷⁸ this new document is unique because it provides detailed information on the specific subjects of the iconographic program, as well as on the specific location, the so-called *schutari*, probably meaning a lunette (see below, p. 281), in which the Last Judgment should be placed. In addition, the precondition that Gaitanas could decide the compositions that would decorate any remaining spaces is not only unique in comparison to all other known agreements but also implies that Neophytos was the one who dictated the subjects mentioned in the document.

Evidently, and unlike all the other cases that we know, Neophytos did not act as the owner of the Church of the Holy Apostles. The involvement of Neophytos, whose name is probably also mentioned in the dedicatory inscription,¹⁷⁹ in such an important notarial deed raises a few questions: was Neophytos Paschales the successor of Neilos Damilas as a cleric-leader in the monastic establishment of Karkasa? Consequently, does the notarial deed of 13 October 1422 indicate the *terminus ante quem* for Damilas's death? Until now, the *terminus post quem* for the latter's death was 22 April 1417, when he composed the inventory of his manuscripts.¹⁸⁰ Although it has been cited by previous scholars as a "testament" based on Damilas's words (*Εἰς τοὺς αὐτῶν εἰς τὸν Ἀπρίλιον μῆνα ἡκοστὴ δευτέρα καθομολογῶ ἐγὼ ὁ ἐν ἱερομονάχοις Νεῖλος ὁ Νταμιλᾶς καὶ γράφω τὴν διαθήκην ταύτην· τὰ βιβλία τὰ ἔχω ἰσὴ ταῦτα . . .*) (On 22 April 1417, I, the hieromonk Neilos Damilas, declare and write this testament; the books I possess are these . . .), this text is irrelevant for establishing when he passed away because there is no

reference to the status of his health, to his postmortem will, or to any executors—in short, all the information that is commonly provided in proper testaments.¹⁸¹ The appearance of the hieromonk Neophytos in Chandax in October 1422 and his subsequent involvement—without power of attorney on behalf of Damilas—in the commission of the wall paintings of the Church of the Holy Apostles to Konstantinos Gaitanas lead us to assume that Damilas had passed away by then.

No other evidence about Neophytos exists, but his last name is found in the area of Hierapetra during the sixteenth century.¹⁸² The notarial Greek registers of Ioannes Olokalos include a deacon called Manuel Paschales (*Πασχαλῆς*) in 1525 and another person with the same name, Manuel Paschales (*Πασκαλῆς*), notary, in 1530.¹⁸³ The fact, however, that Neophytos was simply mentioned in the notarial deed as a resident (*habitori*) of the Holy Apostles monastery and not as a hegoumenos, should prevent us from hasty conclusions about his role in the monastic area of Karkasa. The same consideration also applies to Neilos Damilas, whose status in Karkasa remains unclear. However, his initiative to found the Vaionaia monastery and his involvement in the theological controversies of his time imply that he had at least a leading spiritual role in the monastic community of Karkasa.

The Church of the Holy Apostles in Kato Karkasa

ARCHITECTURE

The church is a single-aisled building covered by a pointed barrel vault in the interior and a saddle roof on the exterior (Figs. 19–20). It has a cylindrical apse in the eastern wall and an original entrance in the southern wall. A second door was opened later in the northern wall, resulting in the destruction of some wall paintings. The interior is divided into three bays by two transverse arches. A modern window in the apse and a second one in the western wall illuminate the interior. The western wall does not bear any wall paintings. It was demolished at an unknown time and was rebuilt. The window on this wall was originally an entrance whose lower part was walled up.

178 We see this in contracts between Nikolaos Vassalos and Markos Mouatsos in 1331, Ioannes Gradenigos and Daniel Gastreas in 1353, Ioannes Frangos and Konstantios Gerardos in 1371, etc.; see above, p. 251.

179 See below, p. 281.

180 Nikolidakes, *Νεῖλος Δαμιλάς*, 47; cf. *PLP* 5085.

181 Despotakis and Rigo, "Neilos Damilas" (forthcoming).

182 The surname is broadly attested outside Crete from the thirteenth century onward; see *PLP* 21998–22013.

183 Mavromates, *Ιωάννης Ολόκαλος*, 77, doc. 41, and 123, doc. 105.

Fig. 19.
Church of the
Holy Apostles, Kato
Karkasa, view from the
west. Photo by authors.



Fig. 20.
Church of the
Holy Apostles, Kato
Karkasa, view of the
interior, looking east.
Photo by authors.



THE FOUNDER'S INSCRIPTION

The dedicatory inscription is situated in the southern wall, to the left of the eastern transverse arch. The letters are faded and the inscription is partially damaged by later carbon inscriptions. It reads as follows:¹⁸⁴ Ἀνηκοδομ[ήθη] κ[αὶ] ἀν[ι]στ[ο]ρήθη ὁ θεῖ[ος] οὗ[τος] κ[αὶ] π[α]τρ[ὶς] π[α]ν[το]ς οὗ[τος] τ[ὸ]ς [να]ός τ[ῶ]ν ἁ[γίων] [π]ανεφ[ήμων] . . . | . . . [συν]εργ[ία]ς . . . | . . . [Νεο]φύτ[ου] . . . | . . . ν . . . | . . . κε . . . | . . . [ς] . . . | . . . (This divine and most revered church of the all-praiseworthy saints . . . was erected and painted with the contributions . . . of Neophytos . . . 69 . . .).

The inscription informs us that the church was rebuilt and redecorated. However, several scholars have noted that the verbs ἀνοικοδομῶ and ἀνιστορῶ can be used as synonyms for the verbs οἰκοδομῶ and ἱστορῶ.¹⁸⁵ Therefore, we cannot be sure that an earlier church existed at this place. It is also impossible to ascertain if the church was painted immediately after its construction was completed. On the other hand, there is no older paint layer in the church. The epithets used in the inscription, combined with the iconographic program (see below), confirm that the church was dedicated to the Apostles Peter and Paul. No other details can be safely extracted from the inscription. From the date at the end, only the letter for the century is still visible. Two graffiti with the date ,ς'η'λα' (1422/23) in the southern wall offer a terminus ante quem or ad quem for the dating of the wall paintings.¹⁸⁶ Based on the discovered contract, we can safely date the wall paintings to the year 1423. The same document supplies the name of the donor, the priest and hieromonk Neophytos Paschales, who made the commission, and the name of the painter, Konstantinos Gaitanas.

THE WALL PAINTINGS

Iconographic Program

As it survives today, the pictorial program of the church comprises Christological and liturgical scenes, scenes

from the life of the patron saints Peter and Paul, and several portraits of male and female saintly figures and prophets.¹⁸⁷ The representation of female saints is highly unusual but does not exclude the possibility that the church at least at that moment was the katholikon of a male monastery.¹⁸⁸

According to the document, the painter Konstantinos Gaitanas was hired to paint the entire church (*depingere totam ecclesiam*).¹⁸⁹ As far as we can judge, he fulfilled this obligation. However, the western wall was rebuilt, resulting in the loss of the wall paintings there. It was agreed that the painter would decorate the church with the following subjects: all stories from the New Testament (Despotikes Eortes, meaning the feast cycle), all stories of the Virgin and the apostles, and the stories of the Last Judgment (Defera Parusia). The painter could freely choose among the “known” subjects for the remaining surfaces, if there were any left. Furthermore, the agreement specifies that the Last Judgment should be painted in the schutari; the Greek word σκουτάριον, which means shield, probably describes a lunette in this context.¹⁹⁰ Since the church does not have a dome, the term likely refers to the lunette/tympanum of the western wall, where the theme of the Last Judgment was situated in Byzantine and Cretan church programs. Unfortunately, the paintings of this wall have not survived.

The church program does not include any scenes from the Life of the Virgin. It is not likely that these scenes were located on the destroyed western wall, since such cycles commonly appear in the bottom zone of the barrel vault. If the Last Judgment was placed there, there would not have been enough space left for a Virgin

184 The inscription was first published by Tsougarakes and Aggelomate-Tsougarake, “Χαράγματα,” 715, no. 404.

185 See, among others, A. Mylopotamitake, “Κτητορικές επιγραφές και ίδρυση εκκλησιών στην Κρήτη κατά την περίοδο της Βενετοκρατίας,” *Ιταλοελληνικά* 4 (1991–1993): 69–85, at 74–75.

186 Tsougarakes and Aggelomate-Tsougarake, “Χαράγματα,” 713–15, and Tsougarakes and Aggelomate-Tsougarake, *Corpus*, 215–17, no. 188. The authors convincingly argue that these graffiti repeat the date of the donor's inscription, since they were incised directly below it.

187 On the wall paintings of this church, see the brief comments by Borboudakes, “Ἡ τέχνη κατὰ τὴν Βενετοκρατίαν,” 246; Maderakes, “Βυζαντινὴ ζωγραφικὴ,” 277, n. 32; and Andrianakes and Giapitsoglou, *Χριστιανικὰ μνημεῖα*, 235.

188 This case is not unique. Female saints are also depicted at the St. Phanourios Monastery in Valsamonero; see M. Acheimastou-Potamianou, “Το κλίτος του ἁγίου Φανουρίου,” in *Οἱ τοιχογραφίες τῆς Μονῆς του Βαλσαμονέρου*, 291–370, at 304.

189 This interesting remark confirms that there were also commissions for the partial painting of a church (cf. above, p. 249).

190 In other contexts, the word points to a round shape or form; see, for example, M. Parani, B. Pitarakis, and J.-M. Spieser, “Un exemplaire d'inventaire d'objets liturgiques: Le testament d'Eustathios Boilas (avril 1059),” *REB* 61 (2003): 143–65, esp. at 158, L. 133, which refers to an enamel roundel.

cycle.¹⁹¹ Moreover, such a combination would have been exceptional. Apart from this, one wonders why a church dedicated to the apostles should also include a Virgin cycle, even if such an inclusion is not unknown on Crete.¹⁹² Be it as it may, it is obvious that the painter did not fully implement the agreement. Another interesting observation is that only the most important subjects were named in the contract, leaving the painter great freedom in choosing the remaining themes.

The Christological cycle, which forms the core of the decoration, begins in the sanctuary with the Annunciation, runs along the barrel vault of the naos in two or three registers per bay, and concludes in the sanctuary, where the Ascension and other Christological scenes are placed. The cycle emphasizes the Passion and includes rare scenes like Christ Ascending the Cross and the events after the Resurrection,¹⁹³ but it also includes one of Christ's Miracles. The enrichment of the Christological cycle with Miracles is rare in Cretan church programs, especially those of single-aisled churches.¹⁹⁴ The cycle with the scenes from the lives and the martyrdom of the Apostles Peter and Paul is very rare on Crete. Here it is subordinated to the Christological cycle and is placed on the lower zone of the northern part of the barrel vault. The Denial and Repentance of Peter are treated as part of the Christological cycle, placed among the Passion scenes on the southern part of the barrel vault as can be observed in the extant church programs and as is

prescribed in the *Hermeneia* of Dionysios of Fourni.¹⁹⁵ The patron saints are also portrayed on the northern wall directly before the sanctuary, opposite the seated Mary and the Child on the southern wall. These two depictions function as proskynesis images.¹⁹⁶ The decoration of the western wall is destroyed, as we have already said. Since the Crucifixion is depicted on the northern wall, the entire wall was probably occupied by the Last Judgment, as was stipulated in the contract. Three of the missing scenes of the Dodekaorton (the Nativity, the Hypapante, the Entry into Jerusalem, or the Anastasis) could have been depicted on the destroyed upper parts of the barrel vault.

More precisely, the iconographic program consists of the following subjects.¹⁹⁷ In the sanctuary, a few remnants of the Pantokrator are visible in the half-dome of the apse (Fig. 21). The triumphal arch was decorated with the Hospitality of Abraham, from which only fragments of the table remain. The Annunciation is placed below it with the Archangel Gabriel on the left and the Virgin on the right. Fragments of one of the concelebrating bishops turned toward the altar are visible in the half-cylinder of the apse on the left. His placement under a painted arch is unusual. A second painted arch is discernible on the right, an indication that all bishops were depicted in this way. The eastern wall is taken up by deacons. On the northern and southern walls of the sanctuary, there are several frontally standing saints under arches, all in bad condition or destroyed. The barrel vault of the sanctuary shows in the western part in the upper zone the Ascension in two halves. To the east of it is the Pentecost, also divided in two parts. The bottom zone in the northern section shows two superimposed busts of saints, followed by the Entombment and the Empty Sepulchre. The southern section is decorated with the rare subject of Christ Appearing to the Apostles (Peace be unto you) and Christ Appearing to the Two Marys (Chairete).

191 To cite just one example, compare the western wall in the Church of the Savior in Potamies that bears a depiction of the Last Judgment and covers the entire wall; for an image, see Ranoutsaki, *Soterias Christos-Kirche*, fig. 30. The same applies to the western wall of the Church of the Savior in Ano Karkasa (this representation is missing from Lymberopoulou and Duits, *Hell in the Byzantine World*, and remains unpublished).

192 Scenes from the Life of the Virgin occasionally appear in other Cretan churches that are not dedicated to her, such as in St. Marina in Kalogerou (1300) (Spatharakis, *Dated Wall Paintings*, 20–21) or in Agioi Pateres in Ano Floria (1470) (Spatharakis, *Dated Wall Paintings*, 215–16). Outside of Crete, this phenomenon is common (see Nitz, “Marienleben,” 215); in the relevant churches, however, the available surfaces for decoration were much larger.

193 On these scenes, see Zarras, *Ο κύκλος των εωθινών ευαγγελίων*, 421 and plan 19, for their placement within the iconographic program of the church at Kato Karkasa.

194 A parallel can be found in the Church of Panagia in Sklaverochori (mid-fifteenth century); see also Borboudakes, “Παρατηρήσεις,” 376.

195 Papadopoulos-Kerameus, *Ερμηνεία τῆς ζωγραφικῆς*, 105; cf. Hetherington, “Painter's Manual,” 38.

196 On proskynesis images with Mary and the Child, see Mailis, *Obscured by Walls*, esp. 82–99.

197 In 1901–1902, Gerola could recognize the following subjects: the Crucifixion, the Raising of Lazarus, the Baptism, two scenes of the Deposition from the Cross, the Last Supper, the Washing of the Feet, the Betrayal, Christ Appearing to the Two Marys (Chairete), the Ascension, and a bust of Christ; Gerola and Lassithiotakes, *Τοπογραφικὸς κατάλογος*, 101–2, no. 748.



Fig. 21. Church of the Holy Apostles, Kato Karkasa, sanctuary. Photo by authors.

The barrel vault of the naos is divided into three zones. In the western bay in the upper register of the northern part, there is a destroyed scene followed by the Raising of Lazarus. From the left scene below it, only a very small part survives. It could belong to the *Helkomenos* scene. Only the lower parts and the feet of at least two figures advancing to the right are visible. Next to this scene is the depiction of Christ Ascending the Cross. In the lower zone, scenes from the Martyrdom of St. Peter have been poorly preserved. Only Peter's Crucifixion on the right can be securely identified. The middle bay displays in the upper register the Last Supper and the Washing of the Feet, the Crucifixion, and the Deposition from the Cross below it, while in the lower register, there are three badly preserved scenes from the Life of St. Paul.

The scenes of the southern part of the barrel vault in the upper zone of the middle bay are destroyed. In the second register, there is a depiction of the Betrayal followed by Christ before Annas and Caiaphas. The Lamentation (*Threnos*) and the Anastasis are placed in

the lower row. The western bay preserves in the upper register remnants of the Baptism and next to it the lower part of the Transfiguration. The central row shows the Denial and Repentance of Peter and the Flagellation, while the Incredulity of Thomas and the Healing of the Paralytic are represented below them.

The northern wall shows full-figure saints, including monastic saints. Some of them are destroyed, while others cannot be identified. To the right of the modern door is St. Nicholas. Saints Peter and Paul, the patrons of the church, are placed under the eastern transverse arch and embracing each other. The southern wall displays, from east to west, the enthroned Virgin with the Child flanked by two angels next to the modern wooden iconostasis, directly under the eastern transverse arch. Three full-figure military saints and three female saints follow, all placed under arches. The transverse arches were probably decorated by prophets, but only a limited number of figures are still preserved. They seem to have been placed within a floral frame.

The decorative program of Kato Karkasa emphasizes Christ's Passion and the notion of martyrdom. Such cycles were regularly included in iconographic programs of Palaeologan churches¹⁹⁸ and especially in katholika of monasteries because they express fundamental monastic ideals. In Kato Karkasa, there was a deliberate effort to create visual parallels between the Passion of Christ and the martyrdom of the patron saints. Both were placed on the northern vault. It is no coincidence that Peter's Crucifixion and Paul's Beheading are placed below the cycle of Christ's Crucifixion. The scenes of the Christological cycle are not presented in a sequential chronological order. Some apparent displacements, such as the inclusion of the Healing of the Paralytic at Bethesda in the events connected to the Resurrection and especially its placement next to the Incredulity of Thomas, can be explained by the influence of the liturgy, or more precisely the liturgical calendar and the order of the liturgical readings. In the period between Easter and Pentecost, Gospel readings on the Miracles are interposed between the pericopes about Christ's miraculous appearances.¹⁹⁹

Iconography

Many scenes have suffered water damage and are covered by protective strips of gauze. For this reason, this study will concentrate on the better preserved and identifiable scenes and figures, beginning with those of the Christological cycle, continuing with the patron cycle, and concluding with some figures of saints.

The Annunciation²⁰⁰ shows Gabriel on the left of the apse stepping to the right and extending his hand toward the Virgin, who is seated in a contrapposto stance on a wooden seat and raising her hand. No other details can be distinguished.

198 See G. Millet, *Recherches sur l'iconographie de l'Évangile aux XIV^e, XV^e et XVI^e siècles, d'après les monuments de Mistra, de la Macédoine et du Mont-Athos* (Paris, 1916), 33–39, and S. Dufrenne, "L'enrichissement du programme iconographique dans les églises byzantines du XIII^e siècle," in *L'art byzantin du XIII^e siècle: Symposium de Sopoćani 1965* (Belgrade, 1967), 35–46, at 41–44.

199 Dufrenne, "L'enrichissement," 42, and Ranoutsaki, *Soterias Christos-Kirche*, 33–36. A fundamental study on this topic is Zarras, *Ο κύκλος των εωθινών ευαγγελίων*.

200 On the iconography of the Annunciation, see J. H. Emminghaus, "Verkündigung an Maria," *LChri* 4:422–37; for Crete, see Kalokyres, *Αι βυζαντιναι τοιχογραφίαι*, 59–61, and Spatharakis, *Rethymnon*, 285–86.

The Baptism is partially preserved (Fig. 22).²⁰¹ Only the feet of Christ, who stands in the river, and the feet of one of the angels, who attends to the right, are in good condition. The river swarms with fish. The personification of the Jordan River can be seen to the left. Jordan is depicted as a naked child turning his head in the direction of Christ and riding on a fish. This motif, which also appears at Protaton on Mount Athos, painted by the Astrapas workshop around 1300,²⁰² is found only at a few churches on Crete, like St. Andrew near the Hodegetria Monastery (beginning of the fourteenth century).²⁰³ Dog-like heads protrude from the banks of the river, a feature inspired by the liturgy that also frequently appears in other churches. On the left riverbank, there is a tree with an axe laid at its root, a scene inspired by John the Forerunner's prediction in Matthew 3:10.

From the Transfiguration,²⁰⁴ only fragments of Elijah's feet to the right of the composition and the three apostles who witnessed the Transfiguration are preserved. The disciples do not have haloes and are shown in a typical manner: Peter on the left is almost seated and raising his left hand; John is in the middle bending to the left; and James is falling backwards. The postures of the apostles correspond exactly to those of the Panagia in Kapetaniana (1401/2) and Sklaverochori,²⁰⁵ and this is the composition that later Cretan icons will adopt.²⁰⁶

Only the lower part of the Raising of Lazarus is preserved. Christ advances to the right with a scroll in his left hand. This hand is at the same time directed at the two women prostrating in front of him: Lazarus's

201 On the iconography of this subject, see "Taufe Jesu," *LChri* 4:247–55; for Crete, see Kalokyres, *Αι βυζαντιναι τοιχογραφίαι*, 64–66; Spatharakis, *Rethymnon*, 289–90; and Tsamakda, *Kakodiki*, 172–74.

202 E. N. Tsigaridas, *Manuel Panselinos: From the Holy Church of the Protaton* (Thessaloniki, 2003), figs. 6–7. On the discovery of the signature of Eutychios Astrapas during conservation work of the wall paintings of Protaton, previously attributed to the legendary Manuel Panselinos, see A. Nastou, "Το συνεργείο του Πρωτάτου και η πρόταση νέας χρονολόγησης," in *Πρωτάτο II: Η συντήρηση των τοιχογραφιών*, ed. I. Kanonides (Polygyros, 2015), 2:40–56.

203 On this church, see Bissinger, *Kreta*, 119–20, no. 86.

204 On the iconography of the Transfiguration, see J. Myslivec, "Verklärung Christi," *LChri* 4:416–21; for Crete, see Kalokyres, *Αι βυζαντιναι τοιχογραφίαι*, 66–67, and Spatharakis, *Rethymnon*, 290–91.

205 Borboudakes, "Παρατηρήσεις," 379, pl. 196a–b, and Maderakes, "Βυζαντινή ζωγραφική," 284.

206 Maderakes, "Βυζαντινή ζωγραφική," 284, with examples.



Fig. 22. Church of the Holy Apostles, Kato Karkasa, detail of the Baptism. Photo by authors.

sister, Martha, holds Christ's foot with veiled hands with Mary, the other sister, behind her. In the background, the lower part of a man standing next to the tomb with the resurrected Lazarus is visible. A figure removing the marble slab of the tomb can barely be discerned in the right corner. The composition follows the contemporary iconographic scheme²⁰⁷ and finds close parallels at the Panagia in Kapetaniana (1401/2)²⁰⁸ and St. George in Emparos (1436/37).²⁰⁹

The upper half of the Last Supper²¹⁰ is destroyed. In the lower half we see the group of apostles seated on a

wooden bench in front of a table. Their backs are turned to the viewer; some of them are shown in three-quarter view and talking to each other. Christ is sitting on the left, but the state of preservation does not allow for a more precise description. From the other side of the table in the background, Judas's hand reaches for the plate with the fish. The arrangement of the scene can be generally compared with that in the Church of the Savior in Akoumia (1389)²¹¹ or the Holy Apostles in Lithines (1416).²¹²

The upper part of the Washing of the Feet (Fig. 23)²¹³ is destroyed. The composition shows Christ on the left wearing a white cloth around his hips and drying with it the right foot of the seated apostle Peter. Peter's left

207 On the iconography of the Raising of Lazarus, see H. Meurer, "Lazarus von Bethanien," *LChrI* 3:33–38, and K. Wessel, "Erweckung des Lazarus," *RBK* 2:388–414; for Crete, see Kalokyres, *Αἱ βυζαντινὰι τοιχογραφίαι*, 67–68, and Spatharakis, *Rethymnon*, 291–92.

208 M. Borboudakes, "3ῃ Εφορεία Βυζαντινῶν Αρχαιοτήτων," *Αρχ. Δελτ.* 53 (1998): 2:3:889–912, at 895, pl. 394.

209 T. Gouma-Peterson, "Manuel and John Phokas and Artistic Personality in Late Byzantine Painting," *Gesta* 22.2 (1983): 162, fig. 3, and Spatharakis, *Dated Wall Paintings*, 185.

210 On the iconography of the Last Supper, see E. Lucchesi Palli and L. Hoffscholte, "Abendmahl," *LChrI* 1:10–18, and K. Wessel,

"Abendmahl," *RBK* 1:2–11; for Crete, see Kalokyres, *Αἱ βυζαντινὰι τοιχογραφίαι*, 70–71, and Tsamakda, *Kakodiki*, 177–78.

211 Spatharakis, *Dated Wall Paintings*, 129.

212 Spatharakis, *Dated Wall Paintings*, 168.

213 On the iconography of the Washing of the Feet, see "Fusswaschung," *LChrI* 2:69–72, and K. Wessel, "Fusswaschung," *RBK* 2:595–608; for Crete, see Kalokyres, *Αἱ βυζαντινὰι τοιχογραφίαι*, 84–85.



Fig. 23. Church of the Holy Apostles, Kato Karkasa, detail of the Washing of the Feet. Photo by authors.

foot is not depicted in the water basin, which is instead unusually painted at some distance. More apostles can be seen behind Peter seated on a high wooden bench, while in the foreground, a few more disciples are taking off their sandals. The composition is executed in a similar manner at St. George in Emparos (1436/37)²¹⁴ and at the Holy Apostles in Lithines (1416).²¹⁵

The Betrayal of Judas (Figs. 24–25) does not include any unusual iconographic elements and essentially repeats the basic elements that the different representations of the theme have in common.²¹⁶ It shows in the middle of the composition Judas embracing and kissing Christ, who is directly looking at the viewer. The group is surrounded by priests, soldiers, and

laymen holding torches or weapons. One of the men is pulling Christ by the shoulders. In the lower-right corner, the kneeling Peter is cutting off Malchus's ear. Comparable to our scene is the scene in the Church of the Holy Apostles in Lithines (1416).²¹⁷ A very close parallel is offered by the composition in the narthex of the Valsamonero monastery (between 1431–ca. 1450), where the characteristic detail of Judas's left sole being turned toward the viewer is repeated.²¹⁸

In the scene of Christ before the High Priests,²¹⁹ Christ is depicted standing to the right with arms

214 Spatharakis, *Dated Wall Paintings*, 186.

215 Spatharakis, *Dated Wall Paintings*, 168.

216 On the iconography of this subject, see above, p. 267.

217 Spatharakis, *Dated Wall Paintings*, 168.

218 M. Acheimastou-Potamianou, "Ο νάρθηκας," in *Οι τοιχογραφίες της Μονής του Βαλσαμονέρου*, 371–428, at 388–89, pl. 97a. This detail can also be observed in Kato Symi; see above, p. 266, Fig. 10.

219 On the iconography of the scene, see K. Laske, "Synedrium," *LChri* 4:233; for Crete, see also Ranoutsaki, *Soterias Christos-Kirche*, 83–85.



Fig. 24.
Church of the Holy
Apostles, Kato Karkasa,
the Betrayal. Photo
by authors.



Fig. 25.
Church of the Holy
Apostles, Kato Karkasa,
detail of the Betrayal.
Photo by authors.



Fig. 26. Church of the Holy Apostles, Kato Karkasa, Christ before the High Priests.
Photo by S. Maderakes.



Fig. 27. Church of the Holy Apostles, Kato Karkasa, detail of Christ before the High Priests.
Photo by authors.



Fig. 28. Church of the Holy Apostles, Kato Karkasa, the Denial of Peter. Photo by S. Maderakes.

extended forward (Figs. 26–27). He moves to the left but turns his head backward, where a soldier is standing. The soldier is about to slap him. The High Priests Annas and Caiaphas are seated on the left on a round bench. In the foreground, Caiaphas is depicted tearing his robe. Between them and Christ stands a young man holding a writing tablet and a pen.²²⁰ Another man stands behind him. A comparable but badly preserved scene on Crete is found at the Panagia in Kapetaniana (1401/2).²²¹ A very close parallel survives in the Church of Archangel Michael in Vlachiana (1447).²²²

220 The text cannot be read due to the destruction of the surface. In the scene of Christ before Pilate at St. George in Emparos (1436/37), the text on the scroll lying on the table reads, “The king of the Jews” (Ο ΒΑΣΙΛΕΥΣ ΙΟΥΔΑΙΩΝ).

221 Spatharakis, *Dated Wall Paintings*, 158.

222 G. I. Vlachakes, *Οι ιεροί ναοί Μιχαήλ Αρχαγγέλου και Τιμίου Σταυρού Αυγενικής* (Heraklion, 1999), 34, fig. 9. Many similarities can be also found in the Church of the Savior in Potamies (last quarter of the fourteenth century), where, however, the episode is combined

The Denial of Peter (Fig. 28),²²³ labeled as H AP[N]HCIC TOY [ΠΕΤΡΟΥ], comprises three episodes. The first, occupying the left half of the composition, shows Peter talking to a maiden. On the right he is depicted again, talking with two men who keep warm near the fire. Both scenes take place before an architectural background. Finally, the Repentance of Peter is placed in the upper-right part. Peter is behind the architectural setting weeping, while a cock is opposite him on the right. The combination of these three episodes in one composition has older antecedents, such as at St. Nicholas Orphanos in Thessaloniki (beginning

with Pilate Washing His Hands; see Ranoutsaki, *Soterias Christos-Kirche*, 83–85, pl. II, figs. 21, 23. The scheme of Kato Karkasa was later employed by the Cretan painter Theophanes in the katholikon of the Lavra monastery (sixteenth century); see G. Millet, *Monuments de l’Athos I: Les peintures* (Paris, 1927), pl. 125.2.

223 On the iconography of this subject, see K. Laske, “Verleugnung Petri,” *LChri* 4:437–40.



Fig. 30. Church of the Holy Apostles, Kato Karkasa, Christ Ascending the Cross. Photo by authors.

the postures of the figures are virtually identical to those in Kato Karkasa.

Christ Ascending the Cross (Fig. 30) is partially destroyed. The scene takes place in front of a low wall denoting Jerusalem's city walls. Christ is in the middle wearing a loincloth, frontally depicted on a ladder before the Cross with his arms tied back. He is being pulled up by two servants who also stand on ladders. A group of laymen and soldiers watches from the right, and one of them points to Christ. Due to the destruction in that part, we cannot ascertain whether the scene was combined with the episode of the Nailing to the Cross or not. The composition of our church is rarely pictured on Crete or elsewhere.²³⁰ This depiction closely resembles the scene at St. George in Emparos (1436/37).²³¹

230 On the iconography of this subject, see M. Boskovits, "Kreuzbestiegung," *LChrI* 2:602–5.

231 Spatharakis, *Dated Wall Paintings*, 186–87. This basic type recurs later in the Cretan School: for two examples at the Lavra monastery in Athos (1535, painted by Theophanes from Crete) and

The churches of Peribleptos and St. Sophia in Mistras offer a reduced version of the same basic iconography.²³²

The Crucifixion follows the customary iconography²³³ and shows Christ on the Cross in the hanging type. His eyes are closed, and his head is bent to the left. The Virgin is on the left slightly falling backward and supported by three more women. To the right of the Cross, John the Evangelist makes the usual mourning

the Great Meteoron (1552), see M. Chatzidakis and D. Sofianos, *Τὸ Μεγάλο Μετέωρο: Ιστορία και τέχνη* (Athens, 1990), fig. on p. 119, and M. Constantoudaki-Kitromilides, "Ο Θεοφάνης, ὁ Marcantonio Raimondi, θέματα ἀλλ'ἀντικα και grottesche," in *Εὐφρόσυνον: Ἀφιέρωμα στον Μανόλη Χατζηδάκη* (Athens, 1991) 1:271–81, at 273–74, pl. 132.

232 G. Millet, *Monuments byzantins de Mistra: Matériaux pour l'étude de l'architecture et de la peinture en Grèce aux 14^{ème} et 15^{ème} siècles* (Paris, 1910), pls. 123.3, 134.5.

233 On the iconography of the Crucifixion, see M. Mrass, "Kreuzigung Christi," *RBK* 5:283–355, and E. Lucchesi Palli and G. Jászai, "Kreuzigung Christi," *LChrI* 2:606–20; for Crete, see Kalokyres, *Αἱ βυζαντινὰι τοιχογραφίαι*, 71–74; Spatharakis, *Rethymnon*, 297–99; and Tsamakda, *Kakodiki*, 183–84.

gesture, and the Centurion points to Christ. Two tiny angels are flying above the groups of people flanking the Cross, but their bad state of preservation does not allow for a more precise description. A low wall can be seen in the background. The same basic composition, though somewhat abbreviated, that includes the rare motif of the fainting Mary can be seen at the Holy Apostles in Lithines (1416),²³⁴ the Church of the Savior in Chantras (beginning of the fifteenth century),²³⁵ and St. George in Emparos (1436/37).²³⁶ The scheme of Kato Karkasa is also adopted in the icon with the Mary and the Child and Crucifixion scenes in the Benaki Museum in Athens, no. 3051, variously attributed to Andreas Ritzos (ca. 1420–before 1503) or to his circle, and dating to the second half of the fifteenth century.²³⁷

The Deposition from the Cross (Fig. 31), inscribed Η Α[ΠΟΚΑ]ΘΥΛ[ΩCIC], takes place before the city walls of Jerusalem. In the middle, the lifeless body of Christ is held by the waist by Joseph of Arimathea, who stands on a ladder to the right, and the Virgin, who embraces the upper part of the body and presses her face against Christ's face. Christ's feet are still nailed to the Cross. The group is flanked on the left by a group of three myrrh-bearers (one of whom kisses Christ's hand) and on the right by John the Evangelist, who makes a mourning gesture. On either side of the Cross appear mourning angels. The lower part of the composition, where usually Nicodemus is shown removing the nails, is badly damaged.²³⁸ The scenes in the narthex of the Church of the Savior in Agia Irini (fifteenth century)²³⁹ and in the Church of Archangel Michael

at Exo Lakonia (1431–1432)²⁴⁰ share the basic iconographic formula and certain iconographic features with our church. However, its counterparts in the works of the Astrapas painting workshop, like those in St. George in Staro Nagoričino²⁴¹ (1316/17), the composition in St. Andrew in Treska (1388/89),²⁴² and especially those in Peribleptos in Mistras (third quarter of the fourteenth century),²⁴³ offer the closest parallels for this specific composition. These compositions certainly derive from the same archetype,²⁴⁴ which was also adopted in the aforementioned icon in the Benaki Museum.²⁴⁵

The Lamentation (Threnos) is poorly preserved but seems to exhibit the standard components of the Byzantine scheme for this subject.²⁴⁶ It shows the Virgin on the left bending over Christ's body and bringing his head to her cheek. Christ's body lays on the *lithos*, the stone of anointing. At least one figure, probably a lamenting woman, is visible behind the stone, while St. John is on the right kissing Christ's hand. A few more figures are to the right of the composition, of which the one in the foreground bending over the feet of Christ is probably Joseph of Arimathea. The scene takes place before the Cross, which stands before a low wall. This specific compositional type already appears in some Macedonian

234 Spatharakis, *Dated Wall Paintings*, 168, fig. 148.

235 Fousteres, "Παντέλι Χαντρά Σητέας," fig. 7.

236 Spatharakis, *Dated Wall Paintings*, 187.

237 N. Chatzidakis, *Icons of the Cretan School (15th–16th Century)* (Athens, 1983), no. 18. For the attribution to his son, Nikolaos Ritzos, see D. Fotopoulos and A. Delivorrias, *Greece at the Benaki Museum* (Athens, 1997), no. 459; see also *The Hand of Angelos: An Icon Painter in Venetian Crete*, ed. M. Vassilaki (Farnham, 2010), 210, no. 53 [A. Drandake], with a dating to ca. 1500. The icon features no mourning angels.

238 On the iconography of the Deposition from the Cross, see M. Boskovits and G. Jászai, "Kreuzabnahme," *LChrI* 2:590–95, and Y. Nagatsuka, *Descente de Croix: Son développement iconographique des origines jusqu'à la fin du XIV^e siècle* (Tokyo, 1979); for Crete, see Kalokyres, *Αἱ βυζαντινὰι τοιχογραφίαι*, 87–88, and Spatharakis, *Rethymnon*, 299–300.

239 Spatharakis, *Dated Wall Paintings*, 104.

240 Spatharakis, *Dated Wall Paintings*, 182–83, and Maderakes, *Εξω Λακωνία*, 94–95.

241 B. Todić, *Staro Nagoričino* (Belgrade, 1993), fig. 88, and N. Zarras, "The Passion Cycle in Staro Nagoričino," *JÖB* 60 (2010): 181–213, at 198–99, fig. 17.

242 J. Prolović, *Die Kirche des Heiligen Andreas an der Treska: Geschichte, Architektur und Malerei einer palaiologenzeitlichen Stiftung des serbischen Prinzen Andreas* (Vienna, 1997), 159–61, fig. 32.

243 Millet, *Monuments byzantins de Mistra*, pl. 122.3.

244 For a discussion of this variant at the Peribleptos in Mistras in comparison with a very similar depiction by Duccio di Buoninsegna in the Museo dell'Opera del Duomo, Siena (1308–1311), see Millet, *Recherches*, 475–78.

245 Fotopoulos and Delivorrias, *Greece at the Benaki Museum*, no. 459.

246 On the iconography of the Lamentation (Threnos), see E. Lucchesi Palli and L. Hoffscholte, "Beweinung Christi," *LChrI* 1:278–82, and I. Spatharakis, "The Influence of the Lithos in the Development of the Iconography of the Threnos," in *Byzantine East, Latin West: Art-Historical Studies in Honor of Kurt Weitzmann*, ed. C. Moss and K. Kiefer (Princeton, NJ, 1995), 435–46; for Crete, see Kalokyres, *Αἱ βυζαντινὰι τοιχογραφίαι*, 88–89; Spatharakis, *Rethymnon*, 300–302; and Tsamakda, *Kakodiki*, 184–86.



Fig. 31. Church of the Holy Apostles, Kato Karkasa, the Deposition from the Cross. Photo by authors.

monuments, such as St. Demetrios in Peć (ca. 1320).²⁴⁷ On Crete, it is encountered, for example, at St. George in Skinias (beginning of the fifteenth century)²⁴⁸ and at the Holy Apostles in Lithines (1416).²⁴⁹

247 G. Subotić, *The Church of St Demetrius in the Patriarchate of Peć* (Belgrade, 1964), figs. 20–21.

248 G. Moschov, “Τοιχογραφημένοι ναοί στην περιοχή του Δήμου Αγίου Νικολάου,” in *Ο Άγιος Νικόλαος και η περιοχή του* (Agios Nikolaos, 2010), 145–88, fig. on p. 188.

249 Spatharakis, *Dated Wall Paintings*, 168.

The Entombment is in very bad condition. One discerns three figures carrying the body of Christ wrapped like a mummy, according to the standard iconographic scheme.²⁵⁰ No other details are visible. A corresponding scene from Crete is found, for instance, at St. Isidore in Kakodiki (1421).²⁵¹

250 On the iconography of the Entombment, see C. Schweicher, “Grablegung Christi,” *LChrI* 2:192–96; for Crete, see Spatharakis, *Rethymnon*, 300–302.

251 S. N. Maderakes, “Βυζαντινά μνημεία του Νομού Χανίων: Ο Άγιος Ισίδωρος στο Κακοδίκι Σελίνου,” *Κρητική Εστία* 4.1 (1987):

In the badly preserved Anastasis,²⁵² one barely discerns Christ in a mandorla standing in the middle of the composition, slightly bending to the right. He extends his hand toward the kneeling Adam, who wears purple garments. Eve, dressed in red, can be seen in the background on the right accompanied by a group of standing figures. Another group is behind Christ on the left. The image is placed against a landscape defined by two mountains. Under Christ's feet, only remnants of the dark cave of Hades are visible, but no other details. The basic type of Christ Descending, with Adam and Eve grouped on one side of the composition and Eve standing behind Adam, recurs in a similar manner in other monuments, such as in Sklaverochori and at the Panagia in Kapetaniana (1401/2),²⁵³ the Holy Apostles in Lithines (1416),²⁵⁴ and the Church of the Savior in Chantras (beginning of the fifteenth century).²⁵⁵

The Empty Sepulchre²⁵⁶ shows on the left a woman clad in purple, approaching the angel who sits on a sarcophagus. The angel holds a staff and points to the right, where the empty tomb, now badly damaged, is situated. The scene is badly preserved. As a result, one cannot distinguish if soldiers were depicted in the lower-right corner, but they were probably not included. It is also unclear whether Mary was accompanied by other women or whether the image only shows Mary Magdalene, as Nektarios Zarras proposes.²⁵⁷ The same scene at Saints Constantine and Helen in Avdou (1445), painted by Manuel and Ioannes Phokas, offers a good parallel.²⁵⁸

The representation of Christ Appearing to the Two Marys (Chairete) (Fig. 32) follows the standard

iconographic scheme,²⁵⁹ in which the composition is arranged symmetrically. Christ stands in the center flanked by the kneeling women, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary. The scene unfolds against a mountainous landscape. Christ raises his right hand in a gesture of speech or blessing and points with the left one to the woman to his right, who wears a purple maphorion. As in the case of Kato Symi, the image in Kato Karkasa invites comparison with the corresponding scenes at St. Phanourios Monastery in Valsamonero (beginning of the fifteenth century) and St. George in Emparos (1436/37).²⁶⁰

In the scene of Christ Appearing to the Apostles (Peace be unto you) (Fig. 32), Christ stands frontally and makes a gesture of blessing or speech. He is flanked by two groups of disciples. The man leading the left group seems to be inclining his head toward Christ. The scene takes place in front of a landscape with a hill behind each group. Unlike the scene in Kato Symi, here it represents the appearance of Christ to the eleven disciples on a mountain in Galilee based on Matthew 28:16–20.²⁶¹ Our depiction belongs to the type represented, for example, in Dečani (1345–1350).²⁶² On Crete, such compositions are infrequent because the type of Christ appearing in front of the closed doors prevails. The one at the Panagia in Kamariotis (beginning of the fifteenth century) corresponds to the scene in our church, but there Christ blesses with both hands.²⁶³ The groups of the disciples are headed by the Apostles Peter and Paul. This is perhaps another reason why this scene was chosen to be included in the pictorial program of the Holy Apostles in Kato Karkasa.

The Incredulity of Thomas conforms to a standard Byzantine formula,²⁶⁴ showing in a symmetrical composition Christ in the middle standing in front of a door, slightly inclining his head, and raising his right arm. With his left hand, he draws his garment

85–109, at 96, pl. 42a, and Spatharakis, *Dated Wall Paintings*, 174–75, fig. 156.

252 On the iconography of this subject, see E. Lucchesi Palli, "Anastasis," *RBK* 1:142–48; on the creation of this subject, see also A. D. Kartsones, *Anastasis: The Making of an Image* (Princeton, NJ, 1986); for Crete, see Kalokyres, *Αἱ βυζαντινὰι τοιχογραφίαι*, 74–79; Spatharakis, *Rethymnon*, 302; and Tsamakda, *Kakodiki*, 186–87.

253 Borboudakes, "Παρατηρήσεις," 380–81, pl. 200a–b.

254 Spatharakis, *Dated Wall Paintings*, 167.

255 Fousteres, "Παντέλι Χαντρά Σητείας," fig. 8.

256 On the iconography of this subject, see J. Myslivec and G. Jászai, "Frauen am Grab," *LChrI* 2:54–62; for Crete, see Spatharakis, *Rethymnon*, 303, and Tsamakda, *Kakodiki*, 165–66.

257 Zarras, *Ο κύκλος των εωθινών ευαγγελίων*, 217, fig. 104.

258 Spatharakis, *Dated Wall Paintings*, 197.

259 On this iconography, see n. 117.

260 See above, pp. 268–69.

261 On the iconography of this episode, see Zarras, *Ο κύκλος των εωθινών ευαγγελίων*, 137–48.

262 Zarras, *Ο κύκλος των εωθινών ευαγγελίων*, 140–41, figs. V and 33, for this and further examples of the scene.

263 Zarras, *Ο κύκλος των εωθινών ευαγγελίων*, 428, fig. 34.

264 On the iconography of this subject, see "Thomaszweifel," *LChrI* 4:301–3, and Zarras, *Ο κύκλος των εωθινών ευαγγελίων*, 241–51, with numerous parallels outside Crete; for Crete, see Kalokyres, *Αἱ βυζαντινὰι τοιχογραφίαι*, 90, and Spatharakis, *Rethymnon*, 304.



Fig. 32. Church of the Holy Apostles, Kato Karkasa, Christ Appearing to the Apostles and to the Two Marys. Photo by authors.

aside to uncover his wound. The doubting Thomas is about to place his finger in the wound. The group of disciples behind him is barely visible. Another disciple stands on the right. The scene takes place in front of an architectural background. Corresponding scenes of the same type on Crete can be found, for example, at Archangel Michael in Prines (1410)²⁶⁵ and at the Holy Apostles in Lithines (1415).²⁶⁶ A close parallel is offered by St. George in Emparos (1436/37).²⁶⁷

The Ascension of Christ (Figs. 33–34)²⁶⁸ is divided into two parts, each showing six apostles. The summit of the barrel vault, where Christ seated in a mandorla usually appears, is destroyed. On the southern half, the Virgin is portrayed standing frontally, flanked by two angels who raise their hands towards Christ. The group is surrounded by the apostles, who gaze at the ascending

Christ. On the northern half of the composition, one distinguishes another angel, clad in military costume (Fig. 33). He stands in the middle of the apostles holding a lance and an open scroll with the text [ΑΝΔΡΕΣ ΓΑΛΙΛΑΙΟΙ] | ΟΙ Τ[Ι] ΕΣΤΗΚΑΤΕ | [ΚΑ]ΤΕΒΑΕ | [ΤΙ] ΟΝΤΕΣ Ε | [Ν ΤΩ ΟΥ]ΡΑΝΩ | . . . (Men of Galilee, why do you stand here looking into the sky . . .).²⁶⁹ These words are usually written above the apostles.²⁷⁰ The relevant passage in the Acts speaks of only “two men dressed in white” who speak these words to the disciples. The insertion of a third angel in the composition is

265 Zarras, *Ο κύκλος των εωθινών ευαγγελίων*, 430.

266 Zarras, *Ο κύκλος των εωθινών ευαγγελίων*, 243, 431, fig. 126.

267 Spatharakis, *Dated Wall Paintings*, 185, and Zarras, *Ο κύκλος των εωθινών ευαγγελίων*, 248.

268 On the iconography of this subject, see A. A. Schmid, “Himmelfahrt Christi,” *LChrI* 2:268–76; K. Wessel, “Himmelfahrt,” *RBK* 2:1224–62; and N. Gkioles, *Ἡ Ἀνάληψις τοῦ Χριστοῦ βάσει τῶν μνημείων τῆς ἀχιλιετηρίδος* (Athens, 1981); for Crete, see Kalokyres, *Αἱ βυζαντινὰι τοιχογραφίαι*, 79–80; Spatharakis, *Rethymnon*, 305–6; and Tsamakda, *Kakodiki*, 161–63.

269 This is a slight variation of Acts 1:11: οἱ καὶ εἶπαν· ἄνδρες Γαλιλαῖοι, τί ἐστήκατε [ἐμ]βλέποντες εἰς τὸν οὐρανόν; οὗτος ὁ Ἰησοῦς ὁ ἀναλημφθεὶς ἀφ’ ὑμῶν εἰς τὸν οὐρανὸν οὕτως ἐλεύσεται ἐν τρόπῳ ἑβέασασθε αὐτὸν πορευόμενον εἰς τὸν οὐρανόν (“Men of Galilee,” they said, “why do you stand here looking into the sky? This same Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come back in the same way you have seen him go into heaven”).

270 Examples of the angel holding the scroll with this text can be found at the Pantanassa in Mistras (dedicated 1428) (M. Aspravaravake and M. Emmanouel, *Ἡ Μονὴ τῆς Παντάνασσας στὸν Μυστρά: Οἱ τοιχογραφίες τοῦ 15ου αἰῶνα* [Athens, 2005], 143, pl. 54), at the Panagia Kardiotissa in Voroi (beginning of the fifteenth century), at St. George in Emparos (1436/37), and at the Panagia in Mikri Episkopi (1444; see Spatharakis, *Dated Wall Paintings*, fig. 171), where the angels, however, are clad in white.



Fig. 33. Church of the Holy Apostles, Kato Karkasa, Ascension and Pentecost, southern halves. Photo by authors.

relatively rare.²⁷¹ But what is exceptional here is the angel's depiction in military costume, which is a clear reference to the Archangel Michael.²⁷² This angel never appears in the context of the Ascension in this way. This unparalleled departure strengthens the eschatological overtones that the scene of the Ascension already encompasses because of its connection with the Second Coming.²⁷³ Here, the angel has been identified as the Archangel Michael, whose role in the Second Coming as leader of the souls is well known. This interpretation

could have been influenced by liturgical or exegetical texts.²⁷⁴ The iconography of the scene closely resembles that at St. George in Emparos (1436/37).²⁷⁵

The partially preserved Pentecost (Fig. 33)²⁷⁶ is divided into two parts, each comprising six apostles. Each half is arranged in similar fashion: they show the apostles seated on a semicircular bench looking in different directions. Peter and Paul, the patron saints of the church, are placed as usual in the middle of the

271 For the angels included in the scene of the Ascension, see Gkioles, *H Anáληψις τοῦ Χριστοῦ*, 315–21. This study, however, focuses on monuments of the Middle Byzantine period.

272 Furthermore, his hieratical depiction has been modeled upon the Archangel Michael as a guardian of the church. In this function, the Archangel Michael, clad in military costume and bearing a sword, is painted near the entrance of numerous Cretan churches; on this, see Kalokyres, *Αἱ βυζαντινὰι τοιχογραφίαι*, 117, and Tsamakda, *Kakodiki*, 83 and passim.

273 See above the relevant passage, n. 269.

274 There are apocryphal texts identifying one of the angels as the Archangel Michael, and there exist depictions of Gabriel and Michael in connection with the Ascension in earlier monuments in Egypt and Cappadocia, but in none of them do the angels appear in military costume; see Gkioles, *H Anáληψις τοῦ Χριστοῦ*, 39, 120, 123–24, 144 with n. 108, 257, 300–301.

275 Spatharakis, *Dated Wall Paintings*, 185–86, fig. 164. In Emparos, however, the Virgin is accompanied only by one angel.

276 On the iconography of this subject, see S. Seeliger, "Pfingsten," *LChrl* 3:415–23; for Crete, see Kalokyres, *Αἱ βυζαντινὰι τοιχογραφίαι*, 80–81, and Spatharakis, *Rethymnon*, 306–7.



Fig. 34. Church of the Holy Apostles, Kato Karkasa, details from the Ascension. Photo by authors.

northern group. Behind the bench, an architectural background is visible. The depiction of the Holy Spirit in the summit of the barrel vault, usually pictured as a segment from which beams of light descend, does not survive in this church. Neither are beams or tongues of light visible above the heads of the apostles. The personification of the Cosmos, denoting the cosmic significance of the Pentecost, is rendered as a bearded and crowned man holding a drapery fold with scrolls, placed in the middle of the apostles in both halves. As already noted, a close parallel regarding both the position and the iconography of the scene can be found at St. George in Emparos (1436/37).²⁷⁷ The iconography also recalls that of Sklaverochori.²⁷⁸

277 For the scene in Emparos, see Spatharakis, *Dated Wall Paintings*, 186–87. The position of the scene in Emparos is identical to that in Kato Karkasa, as is the placement of the Pentecost.

278 Borboudakes, “Παρατηρήσεις,” pl. 187. The positions of the Ascension and Pentecost are here reversed compared to our church.

The Healing of the Paralytic (Fig. 35)²⁷⁹ shows Christ standing on the left of the composition. He is turned to the right, raising his right hand in a gesture of speech while blessing with his left one. A group of disciples stands behind him. On the right, the cured paralytic is advancing to the right. He carries his bed on his back and turns his head backward toward Christ. In the lower-right corner, a small, haloed head is barely visible. The scene takes place in front of an edifice. The composition in our church follows the basic scheme exemplified by St. Nicholas Orphanos in Thessaloniki (beginning of the fourteenth century), which is, however, fragmentarily preserved, as well as by other relevant monuments.²⁸⁰ A similar representation of this Miracle on Crete can be found at St. George in Ano Symi (shortly after 1453),

279 On the iconography of this subject, see M. Kazamia-Tsernou, “Η ίαση του Παραλυτικού στην παλαιοχριστιανική και βυζαντινή εικονογραφία” (PhD diss., Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, 1994).

280 Kazamia-Tsernou, *Η ίαση του Παραλυτικού*, 206, pl. 61.



Fig. 35. Church of the Holy Apostles, Kato Karkasa, the Healing of the Paralytic. Photo by authors.

painted by Manuel Phokas,²⁸¹ where, however, the scene is reversed. In the narthex of the Valsamonero monastery (between 1431–ca. 1450),²⁸² the relevant scene corresponds exactly to the one in Kato Karkasa not only in its general arrangement but also in almost all details. The juxtaposition with this scene also offers a clue for the reading of the detail on the right corner: a flying angel stirring the water in the Bethesda pool, as recounted in the Gospel of John (John 5:4). This motif is found infrequently in monumental art.

The cycle of the patron saints comprised at least four scenes that are in a very bad state of preservation.

281 Spatharakis, *Dated Wall Paintings*, 202.

282 Acheimastou-Potamianou, “Ο νάρθηκας,” 386–87, pl. 96a. The same iconography also follows the scene at Timios Stavros near the Valsamonero monastery; see Acheimastou-Potamianou, “Ο νάρθηκας,” 386–87, with a dating to the beginning of the fifteenth century.

They occupy the northern part of the vault in the middle and western bay, placed in the lower register. The great value of this imagery lies in the fact that cycles of Peter and Paul are very rare in Byzantine (monumental) art and especially in the Palaeologan period.

Apart from the well-known monumental tradition of these cycles in Rome, the best-known medieval cycles are the ones of the twelfth-century Sicilian churches in Palermo and Monreale.²⁸³ These two comprehensive

283 O. Demus, *The Mosaics of Norman Sicily* (London, 1949), 294–99, pls. 40–43, 77–83. For earlier cycles in Rome, see A. van Dijk, “Jerusalem, Antioch, Rome, and Constantinople: The Peter Cycle in the Oratory of Pope John VII (705–707),” *DOP* 55 (2001): 305–28. As already stated, we do not include here the Denial and Repentance of Peter, which appear in illustrations of the Gospels and in Byzantine church programs as part of the Christological cycle; see, for example, these two scenes included in the illustration of the BnF, gr. 54 (thirteenth century): K. Maxwell, *Between Constantinople and Rome:*

cycles were entirely different from the Roman ones.²⁸⁴ Additionally, some cycles are also found in illustrated Acts of the Apostles,²⁸⁵ and some scenes are scattered in other illustrated manuscripts with different content. No apostolic cycles appear in the illustrated menologia.²⁸⁶ Comparable cycles are also absent from the painted menologia in Palaeologan churches.²⁸⁷ An important cycle of the Acts of the Apostles containing 16 scenes from the Life of Peter and Paul is found in Dečani (fourteenth century).²⁸⁸ Only one subject of this cycle corresponds to the Karkasa cycle (see below, p. 303). A small cycle of Peter and Paul also survives at the Belli Kilise in Soğanlı (end of the tenth century)²⁸⁹ and at Balkan Deresi 4 in Ortahisar.²⁹⁰

An Illuminated Byzantine Gospel Book (Paris gr. 54) and the Union of Churches (Farnham, 2014), pls. X (the Denial of Peter), XI (the Remorse of Peter), table 6.8.

284 On the difference between the Roman and Sicilian apostolic sequences and their development, see Demus, *Norman Sicily*, 296–97.

285 The codex of Acts and Epistles owned by the Robinson Trust in London (dated 1107) contains scenes of the Conversion and Martyrdom of Paul; see H. Buchthal, “Some Representations from the Life of St. Paul in Byzantine and Carolingian Art,” in *Tortulae: Studien zu altchristlichen und byzantinischen Monumenten*, ed. W. N. Schumacher (Rome, 1966), 43–48. The codex BnF, gr. 102, depicts the Healing of a Lame Man and St. Peter’s Release from Prison; see H. L. Kessler, “Paris. Gr. 102: A Rare Illustrated Acts of the Apostles,” *DOP* 27 (1973): 209–16, at 211–13, fig. 1. A larger and dense cycle is included in the Rockfeller-McCormick New Testament in Chicago (late twelfth or early thirteenth century); see A. W. Carr, “Chicago 2400 and the Byzantine Acts Cycle,” *ByzSt* 3.2 (1976): 1–29. On this subject, see also L. Eleen, “Acts Illustration in Italy and Byzantium,” *DOP* 31 (1977): 253–78.

286 N. P. Ševčenko, *Illustrated Manuscripts of the Metaphrastian Menologion* (Chicago, 1990), 187, concludes that very few menologia include narrative cycles, though not cycles of Peter and Paul, only individual scenes.

287 As a rule, the menologia in monumental art depict the martyrdoms of Peter and Paul together as their common feast is 29 June; see P. Mijović, *Menolog: Istrojisko-umetnička istraživanja* (Belgrade, 1973), 281, 303, 340, 373, drawings 28, 73, figs. 100, 225, 273.

288 A. Davidov Temerinski, “Ciklus dela apostolskih,” in *Mural Painting of Monastery of Dečani*, ed. V. J. Djurić (Belgrade, 1995), 165–79. For an enumeration of these scenes, see Davidov Temerinski, “Ciklus dela apostolskih,” 178.

289 It shows Peter and Paul before Nero, the Apostles Being Led to the Prison, and the Apostles Imprisoned; see M. Restle, *Die byzantinische Wandmalerei in Kleinasien* (Recklinghausen, 1967), 3: no. 47, figs. 445–48, and C. Jolivet-Lévy, *La Cappadoce: Un siècle après Guillaume de Jερphanion* (Paris, 2015), 261, pl. 244.2.

290 It consists of the Martyrdom of Paul and Peter before Nero; see Jolivet-Lévy, *La Cappadoce*, 177, pls. 176.3, 177.5–6.

On Crete, three more cycles are known to us. At St. Paul in the village of Agios Ioannes (1303/4),²⁹¹ fresco fragments on the tympana of the northern and southern arches most probably belonged to such a cycle. In the central register of the tympanum of the northern arch, an inscription naming St. Paul has been preserved to the left of a narrative scene. However, not enough of the scene survives to allow for an identification of the subject. An unpublished cycle is found in the Church of the Holy Apostles in Agios Myronas and can be dated to the fourteenth century. It is located on the lower register of the barrel vault of the naos and consists of the following scenes: Peter and Paul before Nero, based on an apocryphal joint martyrdom account of the Chief Apostles;²⁹² Peter Imprisoned and Visited by an Angel, based on Acts 12:7; the Crucifixion of Peter; and the Beheading of Paul. Another cycle of Peter and Paul, unknown until now, is found in the Church of the Holy Apostles in Rokka (fifteenth century).²⁹³ It includes the following scenes, located on the upper and lower register of the northern part of the barrel vault of the naos: Peter and Paul before Nero,²⁹⁴ the Beheading of Paul, and the Crucifixion of Peter. A fourth scene placed to the west of the martyrdom scenes is partially preserved but cannot be identified. Finally, there is a scene from Peter’s cycle in the Church of the Holy Apostles in Prodromi (mid-fourteenth century) showing Peter Imprisoned and Visited by an Angel. Additionally, the

291 Spatharakis, *Dated Wall Paintings*, 29–30, with the older bibliography.

292 On these accounts, see *BHG* nos. 1490–1; R. A. Lipsius, ed., *Acta apostolorum apocrypha post Constantinum Tischendorf*, part 1, *Acta Petri, Acta Pauli Acta Petri et Pauli, Acta Pauli et Theclae, Acta Thaddaei* (Leipzig, 1891), 118–222; and D. L. Eastman, *The Ancient Martyrdom Accounts of Peter and Paul* (Atlanta, 2015), 161–385.

293 On this church, see briefly K. E. Lassithiotakes, “Εκκλησίες της Δυτικής Κρήτης, Α': Επαρχία Κισάμου,” *Κρ.Χρον.* 21 (1969): 177–233, at 233, no. 35; the author does not mention the cycle of the apostles. On the style, see Bissinger, *Kreta*, 196, no. 168, with dating to the 1380s.

294 The rare depiction of Peter and Paul before Nero is always related to the Dispute with Simon Magus, as seen, for example, in Monreale (Demus, *Norman Sicily*, 119, pl. 83) and in Mateič (1356/60; see V. J. Djurić, *Byzantinische Fresken in Jugoslawien* [Munich, 1976], fig. 71). However, in Rokka, the apostles are not standing but kneeling before the emperor, perhaps an indication that the scene depicts them receiving their sentence as described in the apocryphal account; see Eastman, *The Ancient Martyrdom Accounts*, 305–7.

Fig. 36.
Church of the Holy
Apostles, Kato Karkasa,
the Conversion of Paul.
Photo by authors.



Embrace of Peter and Paul is depicted next to this scene as a proskynesis icon.²⁹⁵

The scenes from the Lives of Peter and Paul in Kato Karkasa are in such a bad state of preservation that a detailed description and a secure identification are impossible.

The cycle of Paul begins with his Conversion on his way to Damascus (Fig. 36). In the upper part of the composition, the haloed Christ is in the middle, probably seated and extending his right arm. He seems to be flanked by two other people. One more person is in the lower-right corner against a yellow background and bent

to the left. In all probability, another figure was on the left. There was no standardized iconography for Paul's Conversion.²⁹⁶ In most of the cases, Christ is shown as a half-figure in a heaven segment, while Paul, struck with blindness by the apparition, is about to fall to the ground, as, for example, in Codex Ebnerianus, Oxford,

296 On the iconography of this subject, see M. Lechner, "Paulus," *LChrI* 8:140. The painter's guide of Dionysios of Fournas describes the scene as follows: "Saint Paul lying with his face on the ground, with his hands to his eyes; above him is heaven with Christ. A bright light divided into rays descends from heaven on to the head of Paul, with these words written in them: 'Saul, Saul, why persecutes thou me?' Near him four men with fur hats and turbans stand in amazement" (Hetherington, "Painter's Manual," 66); for the Greek text, see Papadopoulos-Kerameus, *Ἑρμηνεία τῆς ζωγραφικῆς*, 179.

295 On this church, see M. Studer-Karlen, *Christus Anapason: Bild und Liturgie* (Basel, 2022), 287–89, figs. 117–18.



Fig. 37. Church of the Holy Apostles, Kato Karkasa, Paul Dictating. Photo by authors.

Bodleian Library, Auct. T. inf. 1. 10, fol. 312v (twelfth century),²⁹⁷ or he is shown in prostration as in the Cathedral of Monreale (twelfth century).²⁹⁸ There are also compositions combining two or more episodes from the account, such as Christ Addressing Paul and Paul Struck Prostrate to the Ground, like the miniature in the Robinson Trust codex, fol. 121v (see above, n. 285).²⁹⁹ In Dečani, where the Conversion unfolds in three scenes, Saul is rendered in the act of falling and raising his head

in the direction of Christ blessing from above.³⁰⁰ As the image in Kato Karkasa does not find close parallels, it could be a deliberate reinterpretation of one of these models, or it reflects an unknown pictorial source.³⁰¹

The next scene, whose upper part is badly damaged, shows on the left a seated person in dark garments whose face is destroyed (Fig. 37). On the right, one sees another seated person with a halo, wearing a white tunic

297 C. Meredith, "The Illustration of Codex Ebnerianus: A Study in Liturgical Illustration of the Comnenian Period," *JWarb* 29 (1966): 419–24, at 423–24, pl. 70d.

298 Demus, *Norman Sicily*, fig. 40a.

299 On this and other conversion cycles, see Buchthal, "Some Representations."

300 Davidov Temerinski, "Ciklus dela apostolskih," 174, fig. 11; for a color reproduction, see G. Subotić, *Spätbyzantinische Kunst: Geheiligt Land von Kosovo* (Düsseldorf, 1998), pl. 70.

301 A survey of the monuments of Western Europe returned no results for this specific type represented by Kato Karkasa; on Pauline iconography in Western monuments up to the thirteenth century, see L. Eleen, *The Illustration of the Pauline Epistles in French and English Bibles of the Twelfth and Thirteenth Centuries* (Oxford, 1982).

and a red mantle and writing down text. It is possible that a basket with scrolls is depicted before the scribe in the foreground. The scene takes place in a landscape. This image immediately recalls the well-known scene of St. John the Evangelist dictating to his scribe Prochoros.³⁰² In the context of Paul's cycle, the fresco at Kato Karkasa most probably represents St. Paul Dictating to Luke.³⁰³ This rare subject is known mainly from the illustration of the Byzantine Gospels and is based on *hypotheses* holding that the Gospel of Luke was dictated by Paul in Rome.³⁰⁴ The subject is present in similar iconography, in the type of St. Paul opposite Luke, for example, on fol. 105v of the illustrated Gospel manuscript Jerusalem, Greek Patriarchal Library, Taphou 56 (eleventh century)³⁰⁵ and on fol. 76v of the Gospel manuscript, St. Petersburg, National Library of Russia, gr. 101 (thirteenth century),³⁰⁶ both prefacing the Gospel of Luke. In these miniatures, the compositions are reversed, and both figures are placed against an architectural background indicating an interior space. In addition, Paul is standing instead of sitting. The same type is represented by Baltimore, Walters Art Museum, W.524, fol. 6v (tenth century), where, however, Paul is also seated like at Kato Karkasa but retains the reversed arrangement

and the architectural background.³⁰⁷ Although this subject was quite rare, there existed further similar images. A poem by John Mauropous (ca. 1000–ca. 1085) echoes this pictorial tradition showing Paul dictating and his association with Luke. The poem is entitled “Εἰς τὸν Ἅγιον Παῦλον ὑπαγορεύοντα, καὶ Λουκᾶν καὶ Τιμόθεον παρεστῶτας καὶ γράφοντας” (“On Saint Paul Dictating, and Luke and Timothy Standing by Him and Writing”).³⁰⁸ The ekphrasis following this title does not help reconstruct the exact iconography of the image that Mauropous saw, but it is clear that the wall painting at Kato Karkasa depicted only one of the scribes. We may exclude Timothy since he was a bishop and is usually pictured in bishop's garments,³⁰⁹ so the identification of Luke seems safe. However, it should be noted that St. Paul Dictating to Luke is not prescribed or described in the *Hermeneia*, which, apart from Paul's Conversion and Paul's Martyrdom, mainly refers to the apostle's Miracles and other events of his life.³¹⁰

Next to St. Paul Dictating to Luke is the Martyrdom of Paul (Fig. 38). Paul is in the foreground clad in long, dark vestments and bending to the left with extended hands. An executioner stands behind him and is about to behead him; only the leg of the executioner is visible. The decapitation takes place in a landscape rendered in ochre-yellow as in the other scenes. The upper part of the composition is destroyed.³¹¹ In the corresponding scene in Rokka, only Paul's head on the left

302 This image often functions as the opening illustration for the Gospel of John and is also found in icons and murals; see M. Lechner, “Johannes der Evangelist,” *LChrI* 7:114–15. On Crete, we can find such a representation, for example, at the Panagia Kardiotissa in Voroi (beginning of fifteenth century); for a detail, see Borboudakes, “Παναγία Καρδιώτισσα Βόρων,” fig. 7.

303 The interruption of Paul's cycle at this point would constitute a conspicuous and highly unusual disturbance of the pictorial program and its inner logic.

304 Such a *hypothesis* precedes, for example, the fourteenth-century Gospel manuscript, Athens, National Library of Greece, gr. 151, fol. 143v; see G. Galavaris, *The Illustrations of the Prefaces in Byzantine Gospels* (Vienna, 1979), 61. The miniature following fol. 143v represents Paul standing behind Luke the Evangelist and dictating in his ear; see Galavaris, *The Illustrations of the Prefaces*, 62, fig. 39; on the relevant hypotheses, see also R. S. Nelson, *The Iconography of Preface and Miniature in the Byzantine Gospel Book* (New York, 1980), 8–9.

305 Galavaris, *The Illustrations of the Prefaces*, 59, fig. 35, and Vocotopoulos, *Byzantine Illuminated Manuscripts of the Patriarchate of Jerusalem* (Jerusalem, 2002), 35, fig. 8. On the subject of authors combined with various “inspiration” motifs and their textual foundations, see Galavaris, *The Illustrations of the Prefaces*, 50–72, and Nelson, *The Iconography of Preface*, 75–91.

306 Galavaris, *The Illustrations of the Prefaces*, 62, fig. 43, and Nelson, *The Iconography of Preface*, 80, fig. 55.

307 Nelson, *The Iconography of Preface*, 77–78, fig. 49.

308 F. Bernard and C. Livanos, eds. and trans., *The Poems of Christopher of Mytilene and John Mauropous* (Cambridge, MA, 2018), 356–57, no. 22, 571. Timothy is mentioned as an assistant in Rom. 16:21, Luke in Philim. 1:24.

309 We see this, for example, in the illustrated Praxapostolos, Baltimore, The Walters Art Museum, W.533, fols. 239r, 247v, and 287r (early twelfth century), where Timothy is portrayed as co-author of some of the Pauline Epistles; see J. C. Anderson, “The Walters Praxapostolos and Liturgical Illustration,” *Δελτ. Χριστ. Αρχ. Έτ.* 19 (1996–1997): 9–38, fig. 16, with further examples for the representation of Paul and Timothy.

310 These are: (1) Paul Called by God; (2) Paul Baptized by Ananias; (3) Paul Escapes Damascus in a Basket; (4) Paul Blinds the Sorcerer Bar-Jesus; (5) Paul Heals the Woman Possessed by the Spirit Python; (6) Paul Shakes off the Viper That Bit Him into the Fire; and (7) St. Paul Dies by the Sword; see Papadopoulos-Kerameus, *Ἑρμηνεία τῆς ζωγραφικῆς*, 179–80, and Hetherington, “Painter's Manual,” 66–67.

311 The city of Rome appears occasionally in the composition; see, for example, Demus, *Norman Sicily*, 299, pl. 77A. On the iconography of this subject, see also Lechner, “Paulus,” 8143.



Fig. 38.
Church of the
Holy Apostles,
Kato Karkasa,
the Beheading of
Paul. Photo
by authors.

and a small part of a building in the upper-right corner are visible. The corresponding scene in Agios Myronas is much better preserved and repeats the iconography in Kato Karkasa. The representation of the theme is based on the apocryphal Acts of Paul.³¹² Depictions of Paul's Beheading can be found, for example, in the ninth-century Homilies of Gregory of Nazianzus, BnF, gr. 510, fol. 32v³¹³ and in the Robinson Trust manuscript,

fol. 121v.³¹⁴ Our image is similar to that on fol. 62v of the BnF, gr. 1528 (eleventh/twelfth century) (illustrated menologion), in which, however, the scene is reversed,³¹⁵ and that in Dečani (fourteenth century).³¹⁶ The scene in Kato Karkasa only generally follows the description in the *Hermeneia*, which adds to the composition more soldiers surrounding Paul and a one-eyed woman nearby

312 Eastman, *The Ancient Martyrdom Accounts*, 126–37, esp. 134–35.

313 L. Brubaker, *Vision and Meaning in Ninth-Century Byzantium: Image as Exegesis in the Homilies of Gregory of Nazianzus* (Cambridge,

1999), 248, fig. 8. This is the earliest preserved depiction of the subject in Byzantine art.

314 Buchthal, "Some Representations," pl. 9.

315 Ševčenko, *Menologion*, 140, fig. 4A12.

316 Mijović, *Menolog*, fig. 225.



Fig. 39. Church of the Holy Apostles, Kato Karkasa, the Crucifixion of Peter. Photo by authors.

looking toward him.³¹⁷ Our scene rather follows a conventional formula and has innumerable parallels to representations of the martyrdom of other saintly figures.³¹⁸

To the west of the cycle of Paul, the Martyrdom of Peter has been preserved (Fig. 39). Only the saint hanging upside down on the Cross clad with a piece of cloth around his hips is visible. A servant on the left is nailing the saint's feet, while another one on the right is nailing the saint's hand. Peter's Crucifixion has also survived in Agios Myronas in a very similar composition. It has a group of soldiers on the right holding round shields.

317 Papadopoulos-Kerameus, *Ἑρμηνεία τῆς ζωγραφικῆς*, 180, and Hetherington, "Painter's Manual," 67. It is unclear if Paul's eyes at Kato Karkasa are covered by the scarf of Perpetua, as narrated in the apocryphal sources; see Eastman, *The Ancient Martyrdom Accounts*, 306–7.

318 Cf. Buchthal, "Some Representations," 43.

This element helps us understand the image at Kato Karkasa, where similar undefined round structures appear at the same spot. The two images follow the same model. The scene at the Holy Apostles in Rokka, on the contrary, differs in some details, like the body positions of the soldiers and the fact that the composition is dominated by the city walls in the background.

Peter's Crucifixion is based on the apocryphal *Μαρτύριον τοῦ ἁγίου Πέτρου τοῦ ἀποστόλου* (the Martyrdom of St. Peter the Apostle), which constitutes the final section of a larger cycle of legends known as the Acts of Peter.³¹⁹ Cycles from the life of this apostle, which, however, do not include martyrdom scenes, can be traced back to early Christian imagery in Rome. Perhaps the earliest depiction of Peter's reversed

319 Eastman, *The Ancient Martyrdom Accounts*, 1–25, esp. 18–19.

Crucifixion can be seen in BnF, gr. 510, fol. 32v.³²⁰ It represents a reduced composition, showing only the crucified St. Peter and a group of men on the left. This abbreviated version is also found in the menologia illustrations in manuscripts³²¹ and in monumental art.³²² The composition in Kato Karkasa echoes a more elaborate version that is reminiscent of the description in the *Hermeneia*: “Peter, crucified head down, dies. A cross planted in the earth; St. Peter is crucified with his feet uppermost and his head downwards. A crowd of soldiers are in a circle round him, some nailing his hands, others his feet.”³²³ A similar version is represented at the Cathedral of Monreale (twelfth century).³²⁴

The cycle of the titular saints in Kato Karkasa clearly focuses on Paul, whose cycle consists of three scenes, while Peter’s cycle is limited to two scenes at most, if one adds the destroyed scene adjacent to his martyrdom. We can only speculate about the missing scene from Peter’s cycle. It could have been a Miracle, as prescribed in the *Hermeneia*,³²⁵ or Peter’s Liberation, as in Prodrumi and Agios Myronas.³²⁶ Given the limited available space in the church, the main reason for the selection of these scenes was that they represented the most meaningful events of the apostles’ lives. The cycle emphasizes conversion and faith attested through martyrdom but not the apostles’ function as miracle workers, as is the case in the *Hermeneia*. The importance of the scene of St. Paul Dictating to Luke remains difficult to elucidate, as we cannot be absolutely sure about the identity of the scribe. His identity is perhaps irrelevant, and the choice of this subject aims to underscore Paul’s

authority as a writer and missionary along with his status and significance as a martyr.

The textual sources for these cycles are the Acts³²⁷ and the apocryphal Passion, which is transmitted in a plethora of versions.³²⁸ But where did the iconographic models come from? For three of the scenes (Paul’s Conversion and the two martyrdoms), one finds antecedents in various media in Byzantine art, even if the iconography in Kato Karkasa seems to follow a somewhat different tradition. For the scene of St. Paul Dictating to Luke, extant Byzantine parallels can be found only in illuminated manuscripts. It is likely that the scenes were excerpted from an extensive narrative cycle of the Lives of Peter and Paul, but there is no sufficient evidence that would allow us to determine the nature of the pictorial source, whether it was an illustrated manuscript or another kind of medium.

The depiction of the Embrace of Peter and Paul stands out (Fig. 40). Both of them, nimbed and clad in tunics and mantles, stand under an arch, embracing each other. Peter is on the left and Paul on the right. The sides of their faces are touching, and the apostles are about to kiss. The representation repeats a well-known formula established in the early Christian period. The theme initially appeared within apostolic cycles but became autonomous after Iconoclasm.³²⁹ In the

320 Brubaker, *Vision and Meaning*, 247–48, fig. 8.

321 An example is in the BnF, gr. 1528, fol. 62v; see Ševčenko, *Menologion*, 140, fig. 4A12.

322 An example can be found in Dečani; see Mijović, *Menolog*, fig. 225.

323 Hetherington, “Painter’s Manual,” 66, and Papadopoulos-Kerameus, *Ἑρμηνεία τῆς ζωγραφικῆς*, 179.

324 Demus, *Norman Sicily*, 119, 299, pl. 81a.

325 The scenes listed in the *Hermeneia* are: (1) Peter Heals the Lamé Man; (2) Peter Kills Ananias and Sapphira; (3) Peter Raises Tabitha; (4) Peter Baptizes Cornelius and Those with Him; (5) Peter Freed from Prison by the Angel; and (6) Peter Kills Simon Magus; see Papadopoulos-Kerameus, *Ἑρμηνεία τῆς ζωγραφικῆς*, 178–79, and Hetherington, “Painter’s Manual,” 66.

326 This scene was exceedingly popular in the Acts cycles; see Carr, “Chicago 2400,” 12.

327 It is generally assumed that the Acts cycles in monumental art derive from an extensively illustrated Acts manuscript; see, among others, Demus, *Norman Sicily*, 299, and Carr, “Chicago 2400.”

328 BHG nos. 1451–52, 1458–59, 1483–85, 1490–92h, and Eastman, *The Ancient Martyrdom Accounts*.

329 Earlier representations depict the saints in isolated scenes rushing to meet each other, like the one on a carved ivory found in Castellammare di Stabia (fifth century), or integrated in narrative contexts; see H. L. Kessler, “The Meeting of Peter and Paul in Rome: An Emblematic Narrative of Spiritual Brotherhood,” *DOP* 41 (1987): 265–75, at 267, fig. 3. The type showing the apostles in full length, standing and closely embracing each other in an emblematic image, seems to first appear after Iconoclasm, such as on lead seals like the one of Nikephoros, sebastophoros of Antioch (1063–1067); see K. Kreidl-Papadopoulos, “Die Ikone mit Petrus und Paulus in Wien: Neue Aspekte zur Entwicklung dieser Rundkomposition,” *Δελτ. Χριστ. Αρχ. Επ.* ser. 4, 10 (1980–81): 339–56, at 349, pl. 98a. In full length and against an architectonical background, they are also depicted on fol. 3r of the Psalter, Athens, National Library of Greece, gr. 7 (second half of the twelfth century); see A. Cutler, *The Aristocratic Psalters in Byzantium*, Bibliothèque des Cahiers Archéologiques 13 (Paris, 1984), no. 2. An early fresco example (second half of the twelfth century) that is fragmentarily preserved, showing only the faces of the apostles, is found in Vatopedi; see *Le Mont Athos et l’empire byzantine: Trésors de*



Fig. 40. Church of the Holy Apostles, Kato Karkasa, the Embrace of Peter and Paul.
Photo by authors.

Middle Byzantine period, the subject was still popular, as a poem entitled “On the Embrace of Peter and Paul” by John Mauropous indicates,³³⁰ but it is found mainly in illuminated manuscripts and on some lead seals. The theme becomes more popular in the Palaeologan period. It is conceived as a double portrait of the saints but reflects a narrative incident from their lives, namely their legendary encounter in Rome, an episode based on an apocryphal tradition.³³¹ The representation occasionally appears in Cretan frescoes, mostly in eastern Crete, as for example in the Church of the Savior in Potamies (last quarter of the fourteenth century),³³² in which the two saints are blessed by Christ, who appears above them, or in the Church of the Holy Apostles in Prodrumi, which is, however, partially damaged.³³³ In Panagia Zoodochos Pege in Prinos (fifteenth century),³³⁴

the image is reversed, something that recalls the Sicilian counterparts of the twelfth century.³³⁵ Placed under an arch, the image recurs also at Agia Paraskevi in Episkopi (first half of the fifteenth century)³³⁶ and in the narthex of the Valsamonero monastery of St. Phanourios (between 1431 and ca. 1450).³³⁷ In all these images, the facial characteristics are almost identical. All images probably derive from the same archetype. Connected with the Valsamonero monastery is the painter Angelos Akotantos, active in Venetian Crete from ca. 1425 to 1450,³³⁸ who has painted a significant number of icons with this subject and eventually introduced this theme into Cretan icon painting.

The theme of Peter and Paul embracing can be read on more than one level. First of all, it conveys the notion of spiritual brotherhood.³³⁹ The basic spiritual association and brotherly unity of the Embrace is also addressed by John Chortasmenos (1370–ca. 1437), who, looking at an icon of this type, mentions that Peter embraces Paul as a brother (ὡς ἀδελφὸν ἀσπάζη) and refers to the concerted mission of the apostles.³⁴⁰ The

la Sainte Montagne, ed. H. Studievic (Paris, 2009), 190, fig. 87. Apart from these examples, there exists a series of rectangular icons and tondi dating from the fourteenth century on, depicting a bust of the saints embracing each other; see M. Vassilaki, “A Cretan Icon in the Ashmolean: The Embrace of Peter and Paul,” *JÖB* 40 (1990): 405–22; E. N. Tsigaridas, “Ο Ασπασμός των αποστόλων Πέτρου και Παύλου στη βυζαντινή και μεταβυζαντινή τέχνη,” in *Πρακτικά του διεθνούς επιστημονικού συνεδρίου “Ο Χριστός στο κήρυγμα του Αποστόλου Παύλου: 2000 χρόνια χριστιανικής ζωής, ιστορίας, και πολιτισμού”* (Veroia, 2000), 80–90; V. Kepetzi, “Autour d’une inscription métrique et de la représentation des apôtres Pierre et Paul dans une église en Élide,” in *Art and Ritual: Byzantine Essays for Christopher Walter*, ed. P. Armstrong (London, 2006), 160–81; and Ranoutsaki, *Soterias Christos-Kirche*, 118–21. The motif of apostles embracing each other is also included in some representations of the Communion of the Apostles; see S. E. J. Gerstel, “Apostolic Embraces in Communion Scenes of Byzantine Macedonia,” *CabArch* 44 (1996): 141–48.

330 Bernard and Livanos, *The Poems*, 360–61, no. 25, 572; on this epigram, see also Kepetzi, “Autour d’une inscription métrique,” esp. 163–64, 177–80.

331 Eastman, *The Ancient Martyrdom Accounts*, 280–81. The embrace can be interpreted as either a greeting or a goodbye. That the image in Late Byzantium was not perceived as part of the apostles cycle can be deduced from the fact that in the *Hermeneia* of Dionysios of Fourni it is not among the scenes of the apostolic cycles but is mentioned *hors-série* in another place; see Papadopoulos-Kerameus, *Ερμηνεία τῆς ζωγραφικῆς*, 178–80, 232. In illustrated menologia, the image sometimes prefaces the part concerning the Martyrdom of Peter and Paul, like in BnF, gr. 1528, fol. 47v; see Ševčenko, *Menologion*, 140, fig. 4A11.

332 Ranoutsaki, *Soterias Christos-Kirche*, 118–21, fig. 38.

333 Studer-Karlen, *Christus Anapeson*, figs. 117–18.

334 O. Gratzou, *Η Κρήτη στην ύστερη μεσαιωνική εποχή: Η μαρτυρία της εκκλησιαστικής αρχιτεκτονικής* (Heraklion, 2010), 283, fig. 309, with a dating in the second half of the fifteenth century; I. Spatharakis, *Byzantine Wall Paintings of Crete*, vol. 2, *Mylopotamos Province* (Leiden,

2010), no. 27, 249, with a dating to ca. 1420; and Andrianakes and Giapitsoglou, *Χριστιανικά μνημεία*, 282, who repeat the old dating in the beginning of the sixteenth century. For more examples of the Embrace of Peter and Paul in Byzantine art, see Kessler, “The Meeting of Peter and Paul,” 265–66, and Ranoutsaki, *Soterias Christos-Kirche*, 119.

335 Demus, *Norman Sicily*, figs. 43A, 83.

336 On this church, see S. Papadake-Oekland, “Μεσαιωνικά Κρήτης,” *Αρχ. Δελτ.* 21 (1968): 2.2:434–35, and Andrianakes and Giapitsoglou, *Χριστιανικά μνημεία*, 106–7.

337 Acheimastou-Potamianou, “Ο νάρθηκας,” 417–18, pl. 114a.

338 For an icon in the Hodegetria Monastery signed by this painter, see Vassilaki, “A Cretan Icon in the Ashmolean,” 410, fig. 10, and Vassilaki, *The Hand of Angelos*, 152, no. 25 [M. Borboudakis]. This type differs slightly from the one in Kato Karkasa in that only the chins of the apostles touch. The touching of the sides of the faces is typical for the tondi and other icon formats painted by or attributed to Angelos; see, for example, Vassilaki, *The Hand of Angelos*, 154–57, nos. 26 [C. Kephala], 27 [M. Vassilaki].

339 Kessler, “The Meeting of Peter and Paul.” The motif of the embrace was also adopted to depict the spiritual brotherhood between St. Basil and Gregory of Nyssa; see a miniature on fol. 204r of the BnF, gr. 550 (twelfth century), and G. Galavaris, *The Illustrations of the Liturgical Homilies of Gregory Nazianzenus*, Studies in Manuscript Illumination 6 (Princeton, NJ, 1969), fig. 416.

340 Kreidl-Papadopoulos, “Die Ikone mit Petrus und Paulus,” 348. The Mauropous poem cited above (p. 302) also highlights the idea of brotherly unity and ecumenical peace: “Ὅθεν συνεργὸν προσλαβὼν τὸν γεννάδα, σκέπτεσθε κοινήν σκέψιν, ὡς σεσωσμένην Χριστῷ παραστήσατε τὴν οἰκουμένην (Therefore take this bearded man as a comrade, and devise a common plan for how to save the world and

Embrace has also liturgical overtones, as it is reminiscent of the prayer at the end of Proskomide and the Kiss of Peace exchanged by clergy at the altar before Communion.³⁴¹ As this embrace of the founders of the Eastern and Western Churches becomes popular in late Palaeologan art, the old concept of the *concordia apostolorum* and ecumenical peace has been frequently seen in relation to the Union of the Churches and the Councils of Lyon (1274) and Ferrara–Florence (1438/39). The apostles’ reconciliation in Rome was thus associated with the efforts to bring about reconciliation between the Western and Eastern Churches. Already in the fourteenth century, the poet Manuel Philes interpreted it as an image propagating the Union of the Orthodox and Latin Churches.³⁴² This also led to ambivalent interpretations among modern scholars. Many frequently argue that these images always contained allusions to actual church politics.

Although it has been generally accepted that the subject alludes to the Union of the Churches, especially in the context of the Latin-dominated areas, this idea cannot be applied to each case. It is impossible to prove that a pro-Union message underlies all extant representations of the subject.³⁴³ In our case, the inclusion

of the Embrace in the pictorial program, its prominent placement in the naos, and its function as a proskynesis icon are clearly due to the fact that Peter and Paul are the titular saints.³⁴⁴ Furthermore, there is no evidence suggesting that a conscious support or promotion of the Union of the Churches was intended by employing this motif or through other images of the pictorial program at Kato Karkasa. Even more significant, there is no mention of this image nor an explicit wish for its inclusion in the iconographic program in the relevant contract between the patron and the painter.³⁴⁵ This is an important point in the discussion about the role of the images and the extent to which they should or could convey certain messages.³⁴⁶

Such a pro-Union intention, aiming at the submission of the Orthodox to the Roman Catholic Church, is furthermore unthinkable within the walls of Orthodox monasteries whose representatives were demonstrably against the Union of the Churches.³⁴⁷ The monastery in Kato Karkasa was considered one of the most significant strongholds of Orthodoxy on Crete. We have already referred to Neilos Damilas, who was a zealous Orthodox hieromonk,³⁴⁸ a scholar, and an opponent of

to present it to Christ [translation according to Bernard and Livanos, *The Poems*, 361]).

341 On this aspect, see N. Gkioles, “Εικονογραφικά θέματα στη βυζαντινή τέχνη εμπνευσμένα από την αντιπαράθεση και τα σχίσματα των δύο Εκκλησιών,” in *Θωράκιον*, 263–84, at 271, n. 40.

342 His epigram no. 184 interprets the Embrace of Peter and Paul as follows: Τὸ μυστικὸν φίλημα τῶν Πρωτοθρόνων / τὴν τοῦ γένους ἔνωσιν ἡμῖν δεικνύει / Τῷ σφίγματι γὰρ τῶν παρ’ ἁμφοῖν δογματῶν (The secret kiss of the two *Protothronoi* / demonstrates the union of our nations / through the clamping of both doctrines); E. Miller, ed., *Manuelis Philae carmina*, 2nd ed. (Amsterdam, 1967), 1:354–55. See also Gkioles, “Εικονογραφικά θέματα,” 276–77, and Ranoutsaki, *Soterias Christos-Kirche*, 121, for further literature. Vassilaki argues that Angelos painted such a great number of icons depicting this subject because he was pro-Unionist; see, among others, Vassilaki, *The Hand of Angelos*, no. 27. However, one should bear in mind that the painter worked on demand, something that would transfer a possible pro-Union attitude to the various clients who commissioned or bought these icons; cf. Katsioti, “Το κλίτος του αγίου Ιωάννη του Προδρόμου,” 259. On the various purposes and functions that the image of Peter and Paul embracing served, see also Kessler, “The Meeting of Peter and Paul,” 274–75.

343 Cf. Katsioti, “Το κλίτος του αγίου Ιωάννη του Προδρόμου,” 259, and Acheimastou-Potamianou, “Ο νάρθηκας,” 417–18. In our opinion, a pro-Union message is not confirmed by the inscriptions accompanying the Embrace at the Church of the Holy Trinity in Ano Divri (second half of the fourteenth century). For the opposite view, see

Kepezzi, “Autour d’une inscription métrique,” 167 (inscriptions), 175–81. These inscriptions are pertinent to this pictorial subject according to the *Hermeneia* (see Papadopoulos-Kerameus, *Ερμηνεία τῆς ζωγραφικῆς*, 232), but in this case, the actions of Peter and Paul are reversed. The emphasis is put on Peter, but a pro-Union attitude of the depiction on the basis of this feature remains ungrounded, especially since there were apparently problems in the correspondence between the depiction and the epigram; on this, see A. Rhoby, *Byzantinische Epigramme auf Fresken und Mosaiken* (Vienna, 2009), 215.

344 Even in churches dedicated to other saints that include the subject, a pro-Union attitude is not automatically more plausible but has to be supported by substantial evidence.

345 Since, according to the agreement, the painter was free to add subjects as he wished, it is possible to ascribe to the painter a pro-Union attitude. However, the pictorial program must have generally been discussed, and the result must have been approved by the patron or their agent.

346 A case-by-case approach is needed in order to ascertain who was responsible for the design of the iconographic program in each church. For the role that painting workshops played on Crete and their practices in this respect, repeating in very different commissions their favorite subjects, and for the interaction between artists and patrons or their agents, see Tsamakda, *Kakodiki*, esp. 248–51.

347 On this issue, see Despotakis, *John Plousiadenos*, esp. 6–12.

348 He is characterized by Nathanael Bertos as ὁ ὑπέρμαχος τῆς ὀρθοδοξίας (the proponent of Orthodoxy); see Despotakis and Rigo, “Neilos Damilas” (forthcoming).

the Union of the Churches. Consistent with this view, even if the decoration of the church postdates his death, it is doubtful that the attitude of the monastery towards the Union drastically changed within just a few years.³⁴⁹ The dedication of the church to the Chief Apostles and their image of Embrace manifest the same obvious veneration and appreciation of Peter and Paul as do the writings of Damilas³⁵⁰ and the works of Joseph Filagrios, another prominent opponent of the Union who was active in roughly the same period and devoted a homily to Peter and Paul.³⁵¹ Both Filagrios and Damilas engaged in a peaceful coexistence with the two Churches,³⁵² a notion best expressed through the Embrace image. Regardless of this basic inherent message, if the Embrace is to be viewed in light of the actual religious policies a few decades before the Council of Ferrara–Florence, one would rather favor an interpretation toward a union on Orthodox terms. This means that in order for the Union to be achieved, the Roman Catholic Church should revert to Orthodoxy,³⁵³ whose dogmas trace their legitimacy in Orthodoxy's continuity with the early Church. In this thinking, the Chief Apostles played a decisive role, as they were the most important representatives of the early Church.

As Herbert Kessler has also pointed out, the Late Byzantine renderings of the theme probably allude to the final emotional encounter of the apostles before their martyrdoms as recorded in a letter

of Pseudo-Dionysius (sixth century).³⁵⁴ Given that the pictorial program of the church in Kato Karkasa includes the scenes of the Martyrdom of Peter and Paul and emphasizes Christ's Passion, this additional interpretation of our scene as the final embrace becomes more evident and plausible than the assumption that it declares support of the Union of the Churches.

Because of the poor state of preservation, very few of the other saintly figures can be identified. They appear in groups. On the northern wall, there is from the west to the east a series of monks followed by a frontally standing bishop who bears the facial features of St. Nicholas (Fig. 41). Unusually, he does not hold a closed book but an open one, the text of which is no longer visible.³⁵⁵ Such a depiction of a bishop holding an open book is very rare in wall paintings but not unprecedented; it finds parallels in the narthex of the monastery of Valsamonero³⁵⁶ and at Panagia Kardiotissa in Voroi.³⁵⁷ In later icons of St. Nicholas, this version is common, though the saint is depicted sitting. The text written on the open Gospel book he holds is always John 10:9 (ἐγώ εἰμι ἡ θύρα, δι' ἐμοῦ ἐάν τις εἰσέλθῃ σωθήσεται καὶ εἰσελεύσεται καὶ ἐξελεύσεται καὶ νομὴν εὐρήσει) (I am the gate; whoever enters through me will be saved. They will come in and go out and find pasture), a passage from the lectionary read on the feast day of St. Nicholas.³⁵⁸ The few letters still readable in Kato Karkasa indicate that here the text was different. As in Valsamonero, the passage written and prominently displayed at that location in the church was certainly not chosen arbitrarily.

On the southern wall from east to west are the enthroned Virgin with the Child flanked by two angels,

349 The date of Damilas's death is unknown, but, as we argue above, he must have been dead at the time the contract with Gaitanas was signed; see also Despotakis and Rigo, "Neilos Damilas" (forthcoming). Thus, the attribution in Borboudakes, "Ἡ τέχνη κατὰ τὴ Βενετοκρατία," 246, of the commission of the wall paintings in the Karkasa monastery to Neilos Damilas is also wrong for this reason.

350 Damilas frequently uses passages from the Pauline Epistles to back up his arguments and urges priests to imitate Paul; see Nikolidakes, *Νείλος Δαμιλάς*, 93–94, 96.

351 On Filagrios and his work, see G. Papazoglou, *Ἰωσήφ Φιλάρργος ἢ Φιλάργιος, ἑνας λόγιος Κρητικός ιερωμένος καὶ Ἀριστοτελικός σχολιαστής τοῦ 14ου αἰώνα: Συμβολὴ στὴν ἱστορία τῆς Βενετοκρατίας στὴν Κρήτη* (Komotini, 2008).

352 Nikolidakes, *Νείλος Δαμιλάς*, 60–61.

353 Katsioti, "Το κλίτος του αγίου Ιωάννη του Προδρόμου," 259, and Acheimastou-Potamianou, "Ο νάρθηκας," 418. On the interpretation of Unionist art, see also R. Cormack, "... And the Word Was God: Art and Orthodoxy in Late Byzantium," in *Byzantine Orthodoxies: Papers from the Thirty-Sixth Spring Symposium of Byzantine Studies, University of Durham, 23–25 March 2002*, ed. A. Louth and A. Casiday (Aldershot, 2006), 111–20, at 116–20.

354 Kessler, "The Meeting of Peter and Paul," 269, n. 19, and 274.

355 The text assigned to St. Nicholas in the *Painter's Manual* reads: 'Ο τὰς κοινὰς ταύτας καὶ συμφώνους... (These common and harmonious...); see Papadopoulos-Kerameus, *Ἑρμηνεία τῆς ζωγραφικῆς*, 154, and Hetherington, "Painter's Manual," 54. This text differs from the one in Kato Karkasa as far as the fragmented state of preservation allows for a comparison. Moreover, it refers to St. Nicholas holding an unfurled scroll as co-officiating bishop; cf. Bábic and Walter, "The Inscriptions upon Liturgical Rolls," 271.

356 Acheimastou-Potamianou, "Ο νάρθηκας," pl. 112a–b.

357 The depiction is unusually placed on the eastern wall to the right of the apse. On the church, see Borboudakes, "Παναγία Καρδιώτισσα Βόρων," where the depiction is, however, not mentioned.

358 See M. Vassilaki, "Μεταβυζαντινὴ εἰκόνα του αγίου Νικολάου," in *Ἀντίφωνον: Αφιέρωμα στον καθηγητὴ Ν. Β. Δρανδάκη* (Thessaloniki, 1994), 229–45, at 243, figs. 1–2, 4.

Fig. 41.
Church of the Holy
Apostles, Kato
Karkasa, St. Nicholas.
Photo by authors.



followed by military saints and female martyrs. There are several examples of the enthroned Virgin that act as a proskynesis icon on Crete, but only a few show the Virgin flanked by angels.³⁵⁹ Such a composition can

also be found in the apse of Christ the Savior in Chantras (beginning of the fifteenth century)³⁶⁰ and in numerous icons from the fifteenth century onward.³⁶¹ One of the military saints could be identified as St. George,

359 For this subject as a prostration icon in Cretan churches, see Mailis, *Obscured by Walls*, 88–99, figs. 140, 152, 154; for iconographic parallels of the composition, see Tsamakda, *Kakodiki*, 68–69.

360 Fousteres, “Παντέλι Χαντρά Σητείας,” fig. 4.

361 See, for example, the central panel of the aforementioned icon in the Benaki Museum, p. 292.

while the bearded one next to him could be Theodore Teron or Theodore Stratelates.³⁶²

Of the prophets on the transverse arches gazing at the Christological scenes and holding open scrolls, only David can be identified, depicted next to the Anastasis. He is holding a scroll with text that can be reconstructed as Psalms 131:8: [ANACTHΘ] I K[YPI]E EIC THN ANAΠAYCIN COY [CY KAI H KIBΩTOC TOY AΓIACMATOC COY] (Ἀνάστηθι, Κύριε, εἰς τὴν ἀνάπαυσίν σου, σὺ καὶ ἡ κιβωτὸς τοῦ ἁγιάσματος σου) (Arise, Lord, and come to your resting place, you and the ark of your might).³⁶³

In sum: From an iconographic point of view, the frescoes of Gaitanas in Kato Karkasa are highly interesting and innovative, as they include rare compositions and unique representations. Despite some differences, the wall paintings in Kato Karkasa are closely related to a group of church programs from the first half of the fifteenth century and especially those of St. George in Emparos, painted by Manuel Phokas. For several of the compositions (e.g., the Denial of Peter, Christ Appearing to the Two Marys [Chairete], and the Pentecost), Emparos offers the closest iconographic parallels. This suggests at least the use of common iconographic sources. Nevertheless, one is tempted to assume a direct relationship between the two painters and their workshops. There are various explanations for this connection. Thirteen years separate the paintings of Gaitanas in Kato Karkasa from the earliest known work of Manuel Phokas,³⁶⁴ so an apprenticeship of Manuel Phokas with Gaitanas cannot be excluded.³⁶⁵ In a document from 9 June 1505, there is mention of a certain Maria Gaitana, whose daughter was married

to the painter Michael Phokas.³⁶⁶ Another possibility would be a common origin or learning background or a collaboration³⁶⁷ for which, however, we do not possess any kind of proof.

There are also iconographic affinities and parallels with other wall-painting programs of the fifteenth century in eastern Crete, like in Chantras, Kapetaniana, and Lithines, whose wall paintings were partially painted by the same workshop.³⁶⁸ Nevertheless, this closeness is eclectic. Our church shares only certain iconographic types with these churches, but these types are not shared by all these monuments. Rather, these apparent iconographic similarities indicate that the same drawings were in circulation among painters who were based in Chandax.³⁶⁹ Moreover, Kato Karkasa can be now added to the list of monuments that played an essential role in the formation of the Cretan School.³⁷⁰ Many of the iconographic themes of the Cretan icons depend on compositions that already existed in Cretan

362 On the iconography of these saints, see above, p. 272.

363 Cf. A.-M. Gravgaard, *Inscriptions of Old Testament Prophecies in Byzantine Churches: A Catalogue* (Copenhagen, 1979), 33. The *Hermeneia* connects this text held by David to the Koimesis scene that is not depicted here; see Papadopoulos-Kerameus, *Ερμηνεία τῆς ζωγραφικῆς*, 82.

364 On the work of this workshop, see Gouma-Peterson, "Manuel and John Phokas." The earliest known work of Manuel Phokas is St. George in Emparos (1436/37), followed by Saints Constantine and Helen in Avdou (1445), where he collaborated with Ioannes Phokas; St. George in Ano Symi was painted soon after 1453 by Manuel Phokas.

365 As we have seen, some documents provide us with information on the duration of apprenticeships; see Cattapan, "Nuovi elenchi," 217. According to these contracts, the apprenticeship lasted between one to ten years, but it is not always stated if the pupils were taught icon painting only or the art of fresco painting as well.

366 Konstantoudake, "Οἱ ζωγράφοι τοῦ Χάνδακος," 317. Some of the painters based in Candia were related to others through intermarriages. Nikolaos Ritzos, who married the daughter of the painter Ioannes Sakellares, is one such case; see M. Cattapan, "I pittori Andrea e Nicola Rizo da Candia," *Θησαυρίσματα* 10 (1973): 238–82, at 263, no. 22.

367 The written sources inform us about the collaboration between painters in Candia, like, for example, the painters associated with Andreas Ritzos; see Cattapan, "I pittori Andrea e Nicola Rizo," 248, 251, 258 no. 8, 261 no. 16, 262 no. 21, and M. Chatzidakis and E. Drakopoulou, *Ἑλληνες ζωγράφοι μετὰ τὴν Ἀλωση (1450–1830)* (Athens, 1997), 324. See also above, pp. 262–63.

368 All these monuments are linked to each other not only through their iconography but also because of their painting programs that enrich the Christological cycle with Passion scenes, post-Resurrection events, and Miracles. On this group, see Maderakes, "Βυζαντινὴ ζωγραφικὴ."

369 We are informed through the written sources that painters sold their working drawings to other painters; for examples of this practice, see Cattapan, "I pittori Andrea e Nicola Rizo," 251 and 262, no. 19, referring to 54 drawings (sqinasmata) that Ioannes Acotantos received from Andreas Ritzos in 1477 as a deposit for a loan.

370 On the relationship between certain Cretan monuments, the art of Constantinople, and the art of Cretan icon painters who later worked off the island, see A. Xyngopoulos, *Σχεδιάσμα ιστορίας τῆς δρησκευτικῆς ζωγραφικῆς μετὰ τὴν Ἀλωση* (Athens, 1957); M. Chatzidakis, "Les débuts de l'école crétoise et la question de l'école dite italo-grecque," in *Μνημόσυνον Σοφίας Αντωνιάδη* (Venice, 1974), 169–211; Borboudakes, "Ἡ τέχνη κατὰ τὴ Βενετοκρατία," esp. 257–62; Borboudakes, "Παρατηρήσεις," esp. 382–92; Maderakes, "Βυζαντινὴ ζωγραφικὴ"; and Bissinger, *Kreta*, 215–21.

wall paintings of the first half of the fifteenth century.³⁷¹ Analysis of their interrelations expands the Cretan School to include the work of Gaitanas, who is one of the most important precursors of the members of the School, as stylistic analysis will also show.

Style

In terms of its stylistic qualities, the Church of the Holy Apostles in Kato Karkasa is a monument of considerable importance among Cretan churches of the Palaeologan period.³⁷² Many of these paintings have lost their upper painting layer, revealing thus the drawing underneath (Figs. 33–35). As is visible mostly in the vault of the sanctuary, the painter incised the wall surface and only made an imprecise sketch, mainly consisting of red outlines. But even these drawings reveal the outstanding quality of Gaitanas's art that exhibits the typical features of the so-called academic style: the scenes are characterized by pictorial symmetry and balanced compositions. The serene and restrained movements of the figures, as well as their calm faces, contribute to the same classicizing effect. This elegance and grace are apparent even in the drawing of the angels of the Ascension (Figs. 33–34). Statue-like figures, like Christ in the Healing scene, ultimately follow ancient models. Only a few scenes, such as the Deposition from the Cross, are more expressive, because they follow an older iconographic type. The paintings are characterized by clarity and precision of forms. Plasticity was reached with the aid of tone gradations, shadows, and highlights in the treatment of garments, which sometimes acquire a metallic look. The faces, which exhibit a facial type not encountered in other monuments, were softly modeled and accentuated with green and red shadows and fine white lines. The well-proportioned figures freely move in a clearly defined space, in which several successive planes can be distinguished. The three-dimensional architectural settings with their typical Palaeologan monochrome rendering contrast with the vivid colors of the figures and emphasize the people in front of them. The landscapes function similarly, responding to the movements

of the figures in the foreground. A background defined by two triangular mountains on the sides with their slopes reflecting the light, such as in the Anastasis scene, is typical for the group of academic fresco decorations of this period.³⁷³

We have repeatedly observed an especially pronounced iconographic affinity with a group of monuments dating from the first half of the fifteenth century. The plastic qualities of Gaitanas's paintings, in combination with the clarity of his compositions and the technique applied, particularly resemble the works of Kapetaniana, Sklaverochori, the Phokas workshop, and related works. However, Gaitanas employs somewhat smoother forms. In his work, he combines the vividness of the group discussed by Maderakes, dating between ca. 1400 and 1430, and the works of later decades that are more influenced by icon painting.

The painters of all these churches are regarded as precursors to the Cretan School. They share the same classicizing stylistic idiom, employed, however, by different artists and resulting in different aesthetic impressions and degrees of classicism. Some of these artists supposedly came from the capital and mirror the lost art of Constantinople.³⁷⁴ Mavrianos and especially Gaitanas must now be added to this group of high-quality painters. They both broaden our knowledge of the art of the fifteenth century substantially, especially the decisive first half of that century, as they help us better understand later artistic developments. The interrelationships of the Cretan church-decoration programs of this group, its inner evolution,³⁷⁵ their artistic links to the art of Constantinople and other major Byzantine centers, as

371 For a comparison of the iconography between church decorations of this period and icon painting, see Maderakes, "Βυζαντινή ζωγραφική," 280–86.

372 Cf. Borboudakes, "Ἡ τέχνη κατὰ τὴ Βενετοκρατία," 246, who underlines the frescoes' excellent quality, which he assigns to Constantinopolitan influence; see also Maderakes, "Βυζαντινή ζωγραφική," 279, n. 35.

373 On this, see Maderakes, "Βυζαντινή ζωγραφική," 297–300.

374 As mentioned earlier, this is the common explanatory framework for the high-quality paintings appearing at this time (see above, p. 247).

375 It is indicative that a key monument of the group, the church in Sklaverochori, was set by Borboudakes at the beginning of the group, dating it to the end of the fourteenth century, while Bissinger regards it as the ending point of this development and dates it to the 1460s; see Borboudakes, "Ἡ τέχνη κατὰ τὴ Βενετοκρατία," 242–46, and Bissinger, *Kreta*, 220, 240–41, no. 222. Maderakes, "Βυζαντινή ζωγραφική," 276–77, dates it to the first quarter of the fifteenth century. The dating difficulties and the inability to determine the stylistic development of the group led Maderakes to date the murals of Kato Karkasa to the beginning of the fifteenth century; see Maderakes, "Βυζαντινή ζωγραφική," 277, n. 32. Borboudakes, "Ἡ τέχνη κατὰ τὴ Βενετοκρατία," 242, dates it to around 1400, while Andrianakes and Giapitsoglou, *Χριστιανικά μνημεία*, 234, place the monument in the fifteenth century generally.

well as their relationship to icon painting and the Cretan School, need to be investigated more systematically.³⁷⁶

Conclusions

In scholarship on Byzantine mural painting in general, as well as on Byzantine mural painting on Crete under Venetian rule specifically, there exist different views and speculations about the interaction between patrons, donors, and painters, their role in each particular commission, and the content of their agreements. For example, peculiarities in the pictorial programs and anything that does not conform to the norm or deviations from established iconography are interpreted as the preferences or personal wishes of the donors. In terms of style and especially with regard to Crete at the beginning of the fifteenth century, church decorations of high quality are automatically attributed to artists from Constantinople. Such assumptions have been made so far due to the lack of contracts or other documents that could be linked to existing church programs. Information about the artistic work of certain painters on Crete in this period has been one-sided, either based only on some pertinent written sources or on existing frescoes, about which, however, no written information existed, except in rare cases when donor inscriptions provide some information about the painters.

Our contribution has partially remedied this situation, since it makes possible for the first time a connection and comparison of archival material and wall paintings that still exist today. The evaluation of the already published contracts from the Venetian period on Crete allowed us to gather important information about the identity of the people who made commissions and the painters, as well as to identify certain patterns in their relationship, communication, and the process of the artists' employment. This rich information provides insight into the remuneration of the painters, the amount of time needed to complete their work, the obligations of both parties signing the

contracts, and several other specific clauses and details of the agreements.

Our introductory analysis provides the framework for the evaluation of the documents we presented. Considered together, they show that some of the assertions and assumptions mentioned above are unfounded or need to be revised. In this context, it is particularly important to note that none of the painters working on Crete and mentioned in the contracts originated from Constantinople. This conclusion is consistent with what is stated in the founders' inscriptions of the Cretan churches. Thus, the claim that Constantinopolitan painters were responsible for the high-quality church decorations in fifteenth-century Crete is unfounded.

Through the contracts published here, the names of two of these painters can be linked to specific church decorations: Georgios Mavrianos created the paintings at St. George in Vrachasi around 1400 and the Panagia in Kato Symi in 1419, while Konstantinos Gaitanas painted the Church of the Holy Apostles in Kato Karkasa in 1423. Both painters were residents of Chandax and were renowned artists who received commissions outside the capital.

With the exception of the church in Vrachasi, the other fresco programs were virtually unknown to scholars despite their outstanding quality. Their presentation in this paper substantially contributes to greater knowledge of fifteenth-century art. Furthermore, a thorough discussion of their iconography and style was necessary, not only in order to classify and evaluate the quality of Mavrianos's and Gaitanas's work, but also to compare it with the content of the relevant archival material. By examining the paintings of these two artists in detail, we are now able to present a clearer view of the art-creation process based on the combination of both sources, archival evidence—that is, the contracts between painters and their clients—and the corresponding wall paintings that still exist.

The available space in each church obviously played an important role, which requires an exact view of the wall paintings in relation to the buildings' size and architecture. This is indicated by the specification found in the contract regarding Kato Symi that Mavrianos should paint the specific subjects in small format (*in opera minuta*) so that all paintings fit in the available space. Even if this expression remains unique, it demonstrates, like the clause to paint the Last Judgment in the schutari in Kato Karkasa, that

376 Maderakes, "Βυζαντινή ζωγραφική," 265–70, delineates the methodological problems related to preceding studies of the beginnings and roots of the Cretan School, which was based primarily on icons and archival material but did not sufficiently consider the Cretan wall paintings, many of which are dated. He rightly questions the common assumption that the high quality of works, such as those in Kato Karkasa, can only be explained by the arrival of Constantinopolitan painters to Crete.

the dimensions of each church and the architecture in general played a great role in the creation of the iconographic program and the placement of its scenes.

Regarding the placement of these wall paintings in the context of fifteenth-century Byzantine art on Crete and Palaeologan art in general, analysis of the pictorial programs has shown that they in general conform to the basic principles of Byzantine church programs. It should also be highlighted that all three iconographic programs presented here are doubtless Orthodox. Their content shows profound theological knowledge and, at the same time, nothing in these programs implies pro-Union intention.

The contracts normally do not mention the content of the iconographic programs. When they do, they do not name the subjects to be painted in all available spaces in the churches but only list the most important ones. In this respect, the document concerning Kato Karkasa is particularly important for listing several subjects that Gaitanas had to paint. Its comparison with the surviving wall paintings has surprising results. Gaitanas obviously did not fully implement the agreement, since he ignored Neophytos's demand to include scenes from the Life of the Virgin. Furthermore, Neophytos dictated several subjects to be painted, but he also allowed Gaitanas to paint the remaining surfaces as he wished. Even if the contract stated that Gaitanas could freely choose among the "known" subjects, the church program contains some rare scenes, among them the cycles of the patron saints. We cannot confirm whether Gaitanas was an exception, but these observations shed a completely different light on the role of the painters, who apparently had much more freedom than previously thought.

The painters' artistic freedom also evidently extended to the iconographic and stylistic features of the paintings, for which, as a rule, no provisions are stated in the contracts. Art-historical analysis of the wall paintings enables us to establish that both painters were well-informed of contemporary trends in Palaeologan art using established iconographic patterns while at the same time offering rare or unique motifs. In

Kato Karkasa, Gaitanas employs innovative and highly interesting compositions. The cycles of Peter and Paul, which are very rare in Byzantine (monumental) art and especially in the Palaeologan period, deserve special mention. Mavrianos's iconography displays pronounced affinities with a group of wall paintings in the churches in Kapetaniana, Sklaverochori, Voroi, and Malles, all dedicated to the Virgin and dating to the first half of the fifteenth century. Their iconography finds correspondences above all in Macedonia and Mistras. Gaitanas's wall paintings find very close iconographic parallels in churches painted by Manuel Phokas, especially St. George in Emparos. It is possible that Manuel Phokas was Gaitanas's disciple. Another important conclusion is that Gaitanas must be counted among the most important precursors of the Cretan School. His academic style exhibits a conspicuous influence from icon painting. The skill of these painters is not due to their Constantinopolitan origin; on the contrary, everything indicates that both Mavrianos and Gaitanas were from Crete.

The detection of different hands at work on the wall paintings and the fact that the wall paintings in Vrachasi and Kato Symi are stylistically not homogeneous confirm the assumption based on the documents that painters did not work alone but led organized workshops including apprentices and assistants, as well as cooperated with other painters.

The combined interdisciplinary view of archival material and art enables the understanding of the creation of art in a particular environment and time and allows these processes to be reconstructed, at least to a certain extent. Especially in the case of Mavrianos, by whom two fresco decorations survive, detailed art-historical analysis grants insight into the structure, *modus operandi*, and development of his workshop over time that would not be possible only on the basis of the relevant documents. This is more generally applicable to fifteenth-century Crete under Venetian dominion. The discovery of analogous documents linked to surviving wall paintings will further demonstrate if such processes are also representative of other periods and regions.

Appendix

Note: All names of witnesses appearing at the end of the notarial acts are rendered in the way they appear in the documents and therefore in italics, since it is impossible at this stage of work to make speculations about the witnesses' origin.

DOC. 1

11 FEBRUARY 1390

CHANDAX

Contract of apprenticeship between the painter Georgios Mavrianos and Nikolaos Charchiopoulos.

Previously published by Cattapan (Cattapan, "Nuovi elenchi," 218, doc. 11).

A.S.V., *Notai di Candia*, b. 24 [Giovanni Catacalo], fol. 80r

Eodem die [XI Februarii 1389]. Manifestum facio ego Nicolaus Charchiopulo, habitator casalis Megachorio de Ca' Cornario, cum meis heredibus, tibi, Georgio Mauriano, pincitori, habitatori Candide et tuis heredibus, quia afirmo tecum Michali, filium meum in filium tuum adoptivum, qui esse et stare debeat tecum in domo tua et tibi servire iuxta suum posse et scire ad omnia spectantia ad artem tuam predictam hinc ad annos decem proxime venturos. Tu vero teneris dicto termino ipsum pascere, vestire, calceare et hospitium sibi dare ipsumque bona fide docere dictam tuam artem. Si igitur etc. Pena yperperorum X, contractu firmo.

Testes suprascripti. Compleri et dare.

On the same day [11 February 1389]. I, Nikolaos Charchiopoulos, resident of the village of Megalo Chorio, of the house of Corner, with my successors, make public to you, Georgios Mavrianos, painter, resident of Chandax, and to your successors, that I entrust you my son, Michael, as your adoptive son. He has to be and stay in your house and assist you in all aspects related to your aforementioned art, according to his capability and knowledge, from this point on for the next ten years. Until then, however, you are obligated to feed him, dress him, give him shoes, and host him, and faithfully teach him your aforementioned art. Therefore, etc. I sign the agreement under penalty of ten hyperpera.

The aforementioned witnesses. Completed and released.

DOC. 2

2 AUGUST 1401

CHANDAX

Georgios Mavrianos acknowledges the receipt of twenty-three hyperpera paid to him by Emanuele Venier by decision of a juridical process. This sum constitutes the debt redemption of a total of 120 hyperpera for Mavrianos's labor in the Church of St. George in Vrachasi.

Previously mentioned by Cattapan, without archival reference (Cattapan, "Nuovi elenchi," 226 and 232).

A.S.V., *Notai di Candia*, b. 25 [Giorgio Chandachiti], quad. 1, fol. 64v

Die secundo [mensis Augusti 1401]. Plenam et irrevocabilem securitatem facio ego, Georgius Mauriano, pictor, habitator Candide, cum meis heredibus, tibi, ser Hemanueli Venerio quondam ser Marci, habitatori Candide, et heredibus tuis, de solutione integra unius sententie late per advocatores, quam obtinui contra te de yperpera XXIII, resto yperperorum centum et XX que mihi dare promisisti pro laborerio quod feci tibi in ecclesia tua vocata Sanctus Georgius de Vraghassi. Nunc autem quia de dictis yperperis XXIII que sunt complere dicte sententie ac in expensis eius tenes mihi integraliter dare et persolvere. A modo, si igitur etc. Pena yperperorum viginti quinque, contractu firmo.

2 [August 1401]. I, Georgios Mavrianos, painter, resident of Chandax, with my successors, fully and irrevocably assure you, Sir Emanuele Venier, son of the late Sir Marco, resident of Chandax, and to your successors, of the full payment according to a verdict issued by the counselors. I have reached this verdict regarding an amount of twenty-three hyperpera against you as the remainder of a sum of 120 hyperpera, which you promised to give me for my labor in the church of yours called St. George in Vrachasi. But now, the payment of the aforementioned twenty-three hyperpera fulfills the aforementioned verdict and provides and pays for its costs to me in full. Henceforth and therefore, etc. I sign the agreement under penalty of twenty-five hyperpera.

DOC. 3

19 MAY 1419

CHANDAX

Contract of wall-painting employment for the Church of Panagia in Kato Symi between the painter Georgios Mavrianos and the Venetian noble Nicola Corner.

Previously published by Cattapan with wrong date “1420, 21 maggio” (Cattapan, “Nuovi elenchi,” 228–29, doc. 29).

A.S.V., *Notai di Candia*, b. 26 [Gasparino Cauco], fol. 94v

Eodem die [XVIII mensis Maii 1419]. Manifestum facio ego Georgius Mauriano, pictor, habitator Candide, cum meis heredibus, tibi, nobili viro ser Nicolao Cornario quondam domini Andree, et tuis heredibus, habitatori ibidem, quia promitto tibi et obligo me tibi depingere quandam ecclesiam intitulatam Sanctam Dei Genitricem, positam in Casali tuo Simes, cum coloribus meis, faciendo omnes figuras istoriarum Jesu Christi et Beate Marie Virginis in opera minuta, sicut dicta ecclesia continere poterit in locis ubi erit expediens et melius. Et pro solutione et labore meo teneris michi dare et deliberare yperpera septuaginta, de quibus confiteor a te habuisse et recepisse yperpera XX et de eis securum te reddo, et alia yperpera XX teneris michi dare quum de hinc recedere in die XV, mensis Junii proxime venturi et deinde recedere non possim neque valeam donec complevero dictas operas sive picturas, faciendo michi expensas oris donec ibi stetero. Si igitur etc. Pena yperperorum XXV, contractu firmo.

Testes. Petrus de Torcello, Georgius Gixi et Christoforus Paulo. Complete et dare.

On the same day [19 May 1419]. I, Georgios Mavrianos, painter, resident of Chandax, with my successors, make public to you, the nobleman Sir Nicola Corner, son of the late Sir Andrea, resident of the same place, and to your successors, that I promise and pledge myself to paint a certain church called Holy Mother of God, situated in the village of yours called Simes, using my own colors, and painting all figures from the stories of Jesus Christ and the Blessed Virgin Mary in small format so that they fit in the aforementioned church's spaces, wherever it is expedient and preferred. And as remuneration for my work, you are obligated to give me and pay me seventy hyperpera, from which I admit to have had and received twenty hyperpera from you, and for these I give you proof. You are obligated to give me twenty more hyperpera upon my departure from here, on the 15th of next June (and neither can I nor will I leave from there until I have finished my aforementioned work, namely, the paintings), covering my expenses for food as long as I am there. Therefore, etc. I sign the agreement under penalty of twenty-five hyperpera.

Witnesses: *Petrus de Torcello, Georgius Gixi, and Christoforus Paulo*. Completed and released.

DOC. 4

28 APRIL 1422

CHANDAX

Contract of wall-painting employment for the Church of Christ the Savior in Kitharida between the painter Georgios Mavrianos and the commissaries of Anna Correr.

Previously published by Cattapan with several errors (Cattapan, "Nuovi elenchi," 230–31, doc. 32).

A.S.V., *Notai di Candia*, b. 145 [Costanzo Maurica], quad. 6, fol. 71v [617v]

Eodem die [XXVIII mensis Aprilis 1422]. Manifestum facio ego Georgius Mauriano, pictor, habitator Candide, cum meis heredibus, vobis omnibus commissariis domine Anne Corratio et vestris successoribus, quia promitto vobis et sum contentus, omnibus meis expensis, pingere totam ecclesiam intitulatam Sanctus Salvator, que est in medium aliarum ecclesiarum positarum in casali vocato Chitharida, faciendo figuras Solemnis Salvatoris et quasdam alias ymagines sanctorum prout nos sumus concordēs. Quod quidem totum opus debeam habere completum amodo in antea usque per totum mensem septembris proxime venturum vel antea. Vos autem mihi dare et solvere promisistis yperpera cretensia centum et non aliquid aliud, que quidem sunt illa que dicta quondam domina Anna dimisit per suum testamentum pro pictura dicte ecclesie. De quibus habui a vobis yperpera LX, reliqua vero yperpera XL quando complevero dictum opus. Si igitur etc. Pena yperperorum L, contractu firmo.

Testes. Franciscus et Iohannes Fradelo. Co. Fo. Iohannes et C. Ashuano. Complere et dare.

On the same day [28 April 1422]. I, Georgios Mavrianos, painter, resident of Chandax, with my successors, make public to all of you, commissioners of the lady Anna Correr, and to your successors, that I promise you and I am pleased to paint at my expense the entire church called Holy Savior, which is situated in the middle of the other churches located in the village called Kitharida, by executing pictures of the Holy Savior and some other images of saints as we have agreed. Indeed, I should finish all this work starting from now until the end of the month of next September or even earlier. Therefore, you have promised to give me and pay me a hundred Cretan hyperpera and nothing else, since this is the amount left by the aforementioned lady Anna through her testament for the painting of the aforementioned church. From this [amount], I have already received from you sixty hyperpera, and I will receive the remaining forty hyperpera when I finish the aforementioned work. Therefore, etc. I sign the agreement under penalty of fifty hyperpera.

Witnesses: *Franciscus* and *Ioannes Fradelo. Co. Fo. Ioannes* and *C. Ashuano*. Completed and released.

DOC. 5

13 OCTOBER 1422

CHANDAX

Contract of wall-painting employment for the Church of the Holy Apostles in Kato Karkasa between the painter Konstantinos Gaitanas and the hieromonk Neophytos Paschales.

A.S.V., *Notai di Candia*, b. 23 [Giovanni Longo], fol. 104v [249v]

Eodem die [XIII mensis Octubris 1422]. Manifestum facio ego Costas Gatana, pinctor, habitator burgi Candide, ac premitto cum meis heredibus, tibi, papati Neofito Paschali, yeromonacho, habitatori monasterii Sanctorum Apostolorum de Cato Carcasia, et tuis successoribus, depingere totam ecclesiam predicti monasterii Sanctorum Apostolorum, videlicet ut quantum spectat ad muros, omnibus expensis, coloribus ac prestamentis meis, excepta tamen calcem, quamquidem tu ponere debeas. Ita quod in dicta ecclesia specialiter infrascriptas pinturas, videlicet omnes ystorias Novi Testamenti, que grece dicuntur Despotiches Eortes, ac omnes ystorias Dei Genetricis et omnium Sanctorum Apostolorum, necnon etiam ystoriā Iudicii, que grece dicitur Deftera Parusia, quam quidem ystoriā depingere debeam in loco dicte ecclesie ubi vocatur Schutari. In reliquo vero spacio dicte ecclesie si quid fuerit pingere debeam omnes illas ystorias seu pinturas honestas atque denotas, que mihi videbuntur. Quod quidem opus Deo favente incipere debeam a quinto decimo die, mensis Aprilis proxime venturis mihi illoque taliter continuare qui nunquam absque tua licentia illud dimittere debeam donec ipsum percomplevero. Tu vero toto tempore quo in dicto operi laboravero, tenens mihi faceri expensis victus competentur iuxta mandatum conditionem mihi quem dari pro mea solutione sive premio dicti mei laboris, yperpera Cretensia centum octuaginta quinque hoc modo, videlicet yperpera vigintiquinque per totum mensem Novembrem proxime venturis, et restum eorum in perficione dicti operis, si ipsum estate proxime venturis perficero. Verum si illud in dicta estate non perficiam, tunc tenueris mihi dare medietatem resti dictorum denariorum, et reliquam medietatem statim cum dictum opus preficero, hac in super declaratione apposita, que quotienscumque pro predicto operi dicte ecclesie mihi opus fuerit illuc venire atque me huc reddere cum quibusvis rebus meis opportunis, semper venire atque redire debeam, omnibus tuis expensis.

Ego vero suprascriptus papas versa vice sum contentus de predictis omnibus et singulis predictorum. Et premitto effectualiter attendere et observare omnia et singular suprascripta modo et forma predictis. Si quis igitur etc. Pro pena yperpera XXV, contractu firmo manente.

Testes. suprascripti. Complere et dare.

On the same day [13 October 1422]. I, Konstantinos Gaitanas, painter, resident of the suburbs of Chandax, with my successors, make public and I promise to you, Neophytos Paschales, priest and hieromonk, resident of the monastery of the Holy Apostles in Kato Karkasa, and to your successors, to paint the entire church of the aforementioned monastery of the Holy Apostles, namely as much as fits on the walls, all at my expense, with my colors and supplies, except for the limestone, which, indeed, you are obligated to provide. Therefore, I am obligated to specifically execute the following subjects, viz., all the stories from the New Testament that in Greek are called “Despotikes Eortes,” all the stories of the Holy Mother of God, and all the Holy Apostles, as well as the subject of the Last Judgment, which in Greek is called “Deftera Parousia” and which I have to paint in that place of the aforementioned church called “Schutari.” In the remaining part of the aforementioned church, if there is any at all, I am obligated to paint all those respected and well-known subjects of my choice. Therefore, God willing, I should start my work on the 15th of next April and continue with it in such a way that I will never quit it without your permission until I have completed it. During the whole time that I am doing the aforementioned work, you are obligated to cover the expenses for my food according to my needs and to give me as my payment, namely, as remuneration for my aforementioned works, 185 Cretan hyperpera in this way: namely, twenty-five hyperpera until the end of the coming month of November and the rest at the completion of the aforementioned work, if I have finished it by next summer. But if I have not finished it in said summer, you will have to give me half of the rest of said money and the other half as soon as I have finished said work. By this way, in accordance with the statement above, with regard to my aforementioned work at said church, whenever it is necessary for me to come thither and to return hither with all my necessary things, I must always come and return all at your expense.

In turn, I, the aforementioned priest, am satisfied with each and every one of the aforementioned things. And I promise to effectively attend to and respect all the aforementioned particulars in the aforesaid manner and form. If anyone then, etc. I sign the permanent agreement under penalty of twenty-five hyperpera.

The abovementioned witnesses. Completed and released.

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